

No Bull! Bullying is wrong!

Learn more and take a stand against it.

Bullying is all too easy to spot. You may have watched a bully hurt or scare someone. *Many young people* — studies reported by the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration say between 15 and 25 percent — *have been victims of bullying.*

It's not just harmless teasing.

A bully might:

- Punch, shove, or do something else that hurts a person physically.
- Spread bad rumors about people to hurt their feelings or damage their reputations.
- Keep certain people out of a group.
- Tease people in a mean way.
- Encourage certain people to gang up on another person or group of people.

Bullies intimidate:

- Physically, by hitting or punching.
- Verbally, by teasing or name calling or rumor spreading.
- Emotionally, by keeping out others from groups, or using threatening gestures.
- In cyber space, by sending messages in text or e-mail.

Unfortunately, not everyone takes bullying seriously, including some adults. But bullying is not harmless fun, just "kids being kids," or simply a part of growing up. Bullying is hurtful to everyone involved from the bully to the victim, and even those witnessing the bullying. However, by learning more about bullying, you can learn to stop and prevent it from happening.

Why would you bully someone?

- Because you see others doing it.
- Because you want to hang out with an "in" crowd.
 - Because bullying makes you feel stronger, smarter, or better than the person you're bullying.
- Because you're trying to keep others from bullying you.



Whatever the reason, bullying is something everyone needs to think about. Whether you've done it or whether you know other people who do it, you need to recognize that *bullying is wrong and can have harmful consequences*.

What's the harm?

More than you realize. Bullying is not just a fact of life or "no big deal." It should be taken seriously. Here are some sad and scary statistics compiled by researchers and reported by the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration:

- **Bullying happens a lot.** Studies show that between 15-25% of U.S. students are bullied with some frequency, while 15-20% report they bully others with some frequency (Melton et al, 1988; Nansel et al, 2001).
- **It can mess up a kid's future.** Young people who bully are more likely than those who don't bully to skip school and drop out of school. They are also more likely to smoke, drink alcohol and get into fights (Nansel et al, 2003; Olweus, 1993).
- **It scares some kids so much that they skip school.** As many as 160,000 students may stay home on any given day because they're afraid of being bullied (Pollack, 1998).
- **Bullying can lead to huge problems later in life.** Children who bully are more likely to get into fights, vandalize property, and drop out of school. And 60% of boys who were bullies in middle school had at least one criminal conviction by the age of 24 (Olweus, 1993).

I'm being bullied. What do I do?

Being bullied can feel pretty awful. But, no matter how bad it makes you feel, you should know you're not alone. There are plenty of kids all over the world who go through the same things you do everyday. And, even though you may feel helpless sometimes, there are a lot of things you can do to help yourself out.



- **Always tell an adult.** They can help put a stop to bullying. Tell any adult you feel you can talk to. Try a teacher or school official who may have noticed the bullying. If you're afraid to tell an adult that you have been bullied, get someone else to go with you.
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- **Stay in a group.** Kids who bully like to pick on kids who are by themselves a lot. Spend more time with other kids. You won't be an easy "target" and you'll have others around to help you if you get in a bad situation.
- **Try to stand up to the person who is bullying you.** If bullies think you won't do anything, they are more likely to keep picking on you. This doesn't mean you should fight back. Instead tell the bullies that you don't like their actions and they should stop. The person bullying you should know that what they are doing is wrong. If you're afraid to talk to the person or persons who are bullying you by yourself, then try getting someone else to go with you. Kids who bully are more likely to listen, and less likely to bully you, when you're not alone. If you're not comfortable doing this, that's okay. But be sure to tell an adult.

I don't bully others, but I've seen it happen. What should I do?

- **Be a friend.** Sometimes the best thing you can do for a person is to just be a friend. That may mean including him in your social or school activities or just spending some time with her. It will make a huge difference! Show a person who is being bullied that you care about him. That can be a BIG help!
- **Stand up to the bullying.** Say it's wrong. Tell the bully to stop. If you can, get some friends to join you. It's not easy to stand up to kids who may be bigger and stronger than you or really popular, but it works! Be sure you don't bully them back. If you don't feel safe telling someone to stop bullying, that's OK. As you can see here, there are other things you can do.



I realize that I've bullied others. What should I do?

Let's face it, hurting and making others feel bad is NEVER cool. Just admitting that you are doing things to harm others takes some guts. But that's not enough. Trying to change the way you're acting is the next step.

Check out these tips. They will help you start treating others with the respect they deserve.

- **Think about what you're doing and how it affects others.** If you think calling others names is really harmless, or if you think pushing, hitting or stealing from other kids is funny, you've forgotten what it feels like to be hurt yourself! Teasing, hitting, excluding others – all are harmful. Next time you are about to bully do this:

Put yourself in his or her shoes.

Think about how it must make him or her feel.

Don't do it.

- **Talk to an adult.** Making other people feel badly should not make you feel good. If it does, or if you're not really sure why you bully other kids, you need to talk to an adult about it. Even though you might think an adult won't understand, or that you'll get yourself into trouble, they can help! Whether it is your parent, a teacher or another trusted grown-up, you should tell an adult how you've been acting so that they help you deal with it. School counselors are also great people to talk to about how you feel and how to change the way you treat others.

For more information: Check out the *Take a Stand. Lend a Hand. Stop Bullying Now!* campaign at www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov. The project and the source of this material were provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, The Health Resources and Services Administration and Maternal and Child Health Bureau.

