



How to recognize bullying and stop it

Bullying hurts us all

Just about everyone will be bullied at one time or another. Someone may try to physically hurt you or may say mean things about you to another person. Both cases are bullying. Bullies do things to hurt people they consider weaker than themselves.

Bullying among children¹

Bullying really can occur at any age, but among children it's especially traumatic. Adults are often better equipped to handle a bully. Children and young adults don't yet have the life skills to protect themselves. And, any child can be bullied. It's not always the smallest kid or the kid that's seen as "different" who gets treated poorly.

Bullying can take many forms:

- Physical abuse
- Verbal attacks or teasing
- Digital or online harassment (stalking someone or saying hurtful things about them by email, mobile phone or the Internet/social media)
- Excluding someone from activities

How it can affect children^{1,2}

Children may show these warning signs if they are being bullied, but be aware that not all kids will show signs:

- Depressed, lonely or anxious
- Low self-esteem
- Physical injuries
- Loss or destruction of personal property
- Headaches or stomachaches
- Poor sleeping or eating habits
- Not wanting to go to school or doing poorly in school
- Helplessness
- Avoiding social situations
- Wanting to hurt themselves

Children may show these signs if they are bullying others:

- Aggressiveness
- Having money or other items that are not theirs
- Hanging around with kids that are bullies
- Discipline issues at school
- Blaming others for problems and not taking responsibility
- Being overly concerned with reputation or popularity

What you can do about it^{2,3}

Only about 1/3 of kids who are being bullied will tell an adult. This can be because of embarrassment, fear or wanting to handle it themselves. But you can watch for the warning signs and talk to your child if you have a concern. Here are some tips when handling bullying:

- Listen to the child and get the full story from others too when you can.
- Do not blame a child for being bullied.
- Try role-playing with your child.
- If the child won't talk with you, suggest a school counselor or other mental health professional.
- Work with school, or other officials, to help all of the children involved.

Find out more about bullying at
stopbullying.gov.



¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: *Tourette Syndrome (TS): Bullying* (accessed September 2013): cdc.gov/ncbddd/tourette/bullying.html.

² stopbullying.gov website: *Warning Signs* (accessed September 2013): stopbullying.gov/at-risk/warning-signs/index.html#bullied.

³ stopbullying.gov website: *Support the Kids Involved* (accessed September 2013): stopbullying.gov/respond/support-kids-involved/index.html.