

What Should I Do If I'm Bullied?

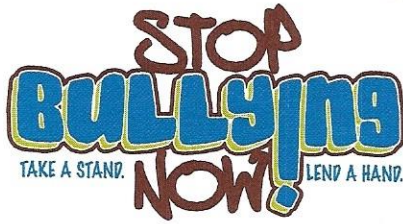
What is bullying?

Bullying happens when someone hurts or scares another person on purpose. The person being bullied has a hard time defending himself or herself. Usually, bullying happens over and over.

Sometimes bullying is easy to notice, such as with hitting or name calling, and other times it's hard to see, like with leaving a person out or saying mean things behind someone's back. Both boys and girls bully, and both boys and girls get bullied. Bullying is not fair, and it hurts.

How to deal with bullying:

- Tell your parents or other trusted adults. They can help stop the bullying.
- If you are bullied at school, tell your teacher, school counselor, or principal. Telling is not tattling.
- Don't fight back. Don't try to bully those who bully you.
- Try not to show anger or fear. Students who bully like to see that they can upset you.
- Calmly tell the student to stop...or say nothing and then walk away.
- Use humor, if this is easy for you to do. (For example, if a student makes fun of your clothing, laugh and say, "Yeah, I think this shirt is kind of funny-looking, too.")
- Try to avoid situations in which bullying is likely to happen. You might want to
 - Avoid areas of the school where there are not many students or teachers around.
 - Make sure you aren't alone in the bathroom or locker room.
 - Sit near the front of the bus.
 - Don't bring expensive things or lots of money to school.
 - Sit with a group of friends at lunch.
 - Take a different route through hallways or walk with friends or a teacher to your classes.



What Can Students and Youth Do to "Lend a Hand?"

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What do YOU do when you see someone being bullied at school?

- *Ask yourself, "Is it my job to help?"*

Think about how YOU might feel if the bullying was happening to you. You and other kids can lend a hand, even when you aren't close friends with the kids who are bullied. Your school will be a better place if you help stop bullying. And making your school a better place is EVERYONE'S job!

What can I do?

- *Lots of things! Think about what may work for you:*
 - Don't just stand there. . . SAY SOMETHING!
 - Kids who bully may think they're being funny or "cool." If you feel safe, tell the person to STOP the bullying behavior. Say you don't like it and that it isn't funny.
 - DON'T BULLY BACK! It won't help if you use mean names or actions, and it could make things worse.

What if I don't feel safe telling a bully to stop?

- *That's okay.*
 - No one should put themselves in an unsafe situation. How ELSE can you lend a hand when bullying happens?

- Say kind words to the child who is being bullied, such as "I'm sorry about what happened," and "I don't like it!" Help them understand that it's not his or her fault. Be a friend. Invite that student to do things with you, such as sit together at lunch or work together on a project. **EVERYONE NEEDS A FRIEND!**
- Tell the student who is being bullied to talk to someone about what happened. Offer to help by going along.
- Pay attention to the other kids who see the bullying. (These people are called "bystanders.") Are any of them laughing or joining in with the bullying? If yes, these kids are part of the problem. Let those students know that they're not helping! **DON'T** be one of them!
- *Tell an adult.* (This is **IMPORTANT!!**)
 - Chances are, the kid who is being bullied needs help from an adult. The kid who is doing the bullying probably does, too. Often, the bullying does not get reported. But, who should you tell? Think about who you could tell in your school:
 - Teacher (which one would you talk to?),
 - School counselor,
 - Cafeteria or Playground Aid,
 - School nurse,
 - Principal,
 - Bus driver, or
 - Other adults you feel comfortable telling.

If you need help telling, take a friend along.

Why don't some kids tell when they see bullying?

- They may not want others to think they are "tattling."
- They may be afraid that the kids who bully will pick on them next.
- They may think that their friends will make fun of them for trying to help.

Telling is very important! Reporting that someone is getting bullied or hurt in some other way is NOT "tattling." Adults at school can help. Ask them to help keep you safe after telling. Explain to your friends that bullying is NOT fair and encourage them to join in helping!

What if the bullying doesn't happen at school?

- If there is an adult around, report the bullying to an adult (your youth group leader, minister, or sports coach).
- No matter where the bullying happens, you should talk to your parents about bullying that you see or know about. Ask them for their ideas about how to help.

We ALL must do our part! Kids who are bullied deserve to feel safe and welcome at school and in their neighborhoods. All kids do! TAKE A STAND. LEND A HAND. STOP BULLYING NOW! Check out other activities at www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov for more ideas about how you can "lend a hand" to stop bullying.

References

Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying At School: What We Know and What We Can Do*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc.