



Bullying

What is Bullying?



Bullying is violence and abuse that is perpetrated among peers. It is abuse that is repeated over time; with the intention to cause suffering in someone else; and involves an imbalance of power between the parties.

Bullying is a social and group phenomenon in which the behaviour of all those involved (victims, bullies and bystanders) influences both its presence and prevalence. Bullying is often covert and hidden from adults.



Bullying has concerning consequences for students, groups, communities, and society. Bullying can have negative impacts on someone's physical and mental health. Most commonly reported impacts include: anxiety, low self-esteem, depression, self-mutilation, loneliness, and suicide, as well as becoming a bully towards others. In regards to social development, bullying affects interpersonal relationships when a passive relationship is adopted or when aggressive behavior is used as an alternative to solving conflicts.

Types of Bullying:

Physical

Bullying can be physical like fighting or inflicting physical harm on someone or their personal property or physical intimidation of violent gestures.



Verbal

Bullying can be verbal like threatening, name-calling or teasing, harassment and making verbal threats of violence or harm.



Social

Bullying can be social like hyper-focusing on someone, excluding someone from a group, starting rumors or sharing things that harms someone's reputation or their acceptance by peers.



Virtual

Virtual bullying is cyber-bullying: harmful posts, fabricated information, stealing information, sending harmful messages, posts, images or videos. This bullying is especially dangerous as it is more covert and has a dramatic social permanence and platform.





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WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?



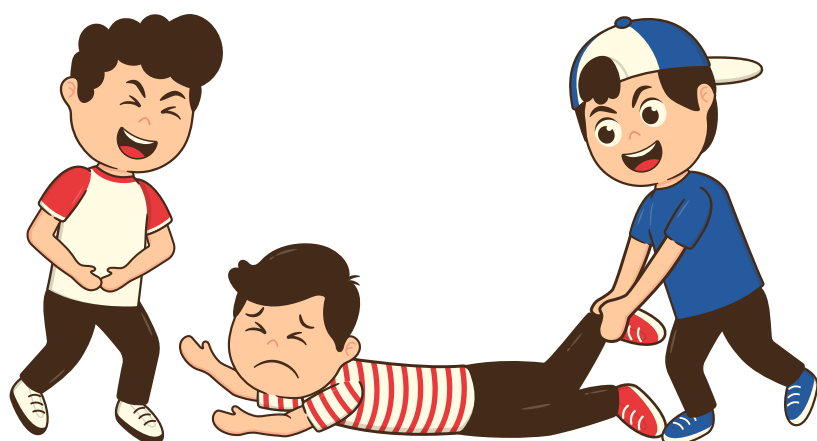
According to the 2019 Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth (CHSCY), the majority of Canadian youth aged 12 to 17 (71%) reported experiencing at least one form of bullying in the past twelve months. Among youth who experienced bullying, about two in five (42%) reported experiencing it monthly or more frequently, while 58% reported experiencing bullying a few times a year.



Young people who are bullies are more likely to do poorly in school, turn to violence as a way to deal with problems, damage property or steal, abuse drugs or alcohol, get in trouble with the law, lack developing healthy relationships, be isolated or be the victim of retaliation.



Bullying is not normal or just a part of growing up, so take any bullying behaviour seriously. Bullying is not something that just goes away on its own and it's not something that young people can just "work out" on their own.



Bullying is different from "rough play", personal conflicts or arguments, disagreements, dislikes or random acts of aggression. Bullying is harm that is deliberate and intentionally aimed with the purpose to harm and assert power over someone else.





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How to prevent bullying:

HELP KIDS UNDERSTAND BULLYING

Talk with your young person about what bullying is and that it is not ok and harmful. Talk about the types of bullying, how to stand up for yourself safely, and how to be an ally when bullying is happening, and how to get help. When people understand what bullying is, they are able to better identify it and more aware of doing something about it.

DEVELOP A RELATIONSHIP WITH OPEN COMMUNICATION

Check in with kids often. Listen to them. Know their friends, ask about school, and understand their concerns. Demonstrate compassion and support and unconditional acceptance. Let the young person know you care about them and they can trust you to talk about anything regardless of topic and you will be there to be supportive. Talking about what's happening in their life and their feelings is important. You could ask things like: *What was one good thing that happened today? Any bad things? What is lunch time like at your school? Who do you sit with? What do you talk about? What is it like to ride the school bus? What are you good at? What do you like best about yourself?*

ENCOURAGE KIDS TO DO WHAT THEY LOVE

Support them in developing and pursuing special interests, activities, hobbies, and involvement in groups which can help boost their confidence, help them to make friends and protect them from bullying behaviour.



MODEL HOW TO TREAT OTHERS WITH RESPECT

Lead by example in how to treat others with kindness and respect as well as modelling healthy conflict resolution, apologizing and relationship repair after conflict. We are social beings that learn so much from observing and mimicking others. Supporting the young person in healthy emotional regulation techniques, decision making, communication and coping skills can arm young people with skills to avoid or navigate bullying.





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How to talk about bullying:

It's always good to talk about bullying and other challenging topics as openly and directly as possible. This will help to normalize talking about it and help you gain a better understanding of what's going on for your young person. It's important to relay that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions and that you are going to be there to support them in whatever arises.

Some conversation starters include:

- What does "bullying" mean to you?
- Describe what kids who bully are like. Why do you think people bully?
- Who are the adults you trust most when it comes to things like bullying?
- Have you ever felt scared to go to school because you were afraid of bullying? What ways have you tried to change it?
- What do you think parents can do to help stop bullying?
- Have you or your friends left other kids out on purpose? Do you think that was bullying? Why or why not?
- What do you usually do when you see bullying going on?
- Do you ever see kids at your school being bullied by other kids? How does it make you feel?
- Have you ever tried to help someone who is being bullied? What happened? What would you do if it happens again?





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How to support a bully:

What to do if your young person is bullying



It is totally normal to feel shocked, worried, fearful or even to deny or defend your young person, but try to be open to listen to what others (teachers, parents of peers, coaches, other young people etc.) are saying about your young person.

Here are some tips of what you can do:

Stay calm - Avoid blame and focus on potential solutions. Manage your emotions and get the facts, and sometimes it can be important to take some time to process the situation/facts.



Talk with your child - Have a conversation about what bullying is to help your young person understand. Let them know firmly that bullying is unacceptable, and that it must stop. Assure the young person that you care about them, they are not alone, and you are able to support them through this.

Ask why - Try to find out if there is something troubling your child either at school or at home. Thank your young person for communicating with you and trusting to come to you for support. Try to remain nonjudgemental in gathering all the information. Talking about it can also help you identify if your young person is upset, jealous, unhappy or has maybe been bullied themselves.



Questions you could ask could include:

- Do you know what they are talking about?
- What happened?
- Is any of this true?
- Can you help me to see why the other kids sees it their way?
- How would you feel if he or she did that to you?
- How long has this bullying been going on for?
- Who is all involved in the bullying. Is it always with the same person/people, or different?
- What triggers the bullying? Is it a consistent trigger?

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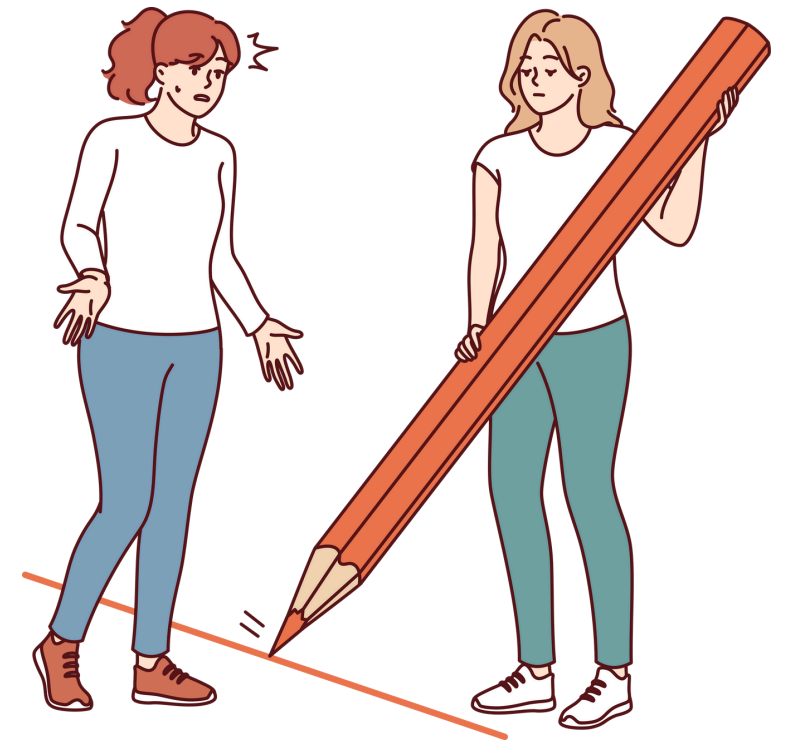




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How to support a bully:

What to do if your young person is bullying



Get on board - Take it seriously. Support the school policy. Let the school know that you are aware of the bullying, you take it seriously and you are doing what you can to support stopping the bullying behaviour. Reach out to other adults in the young person's life to better understand what is happening and what strategies are already in action.

Set clear, but reasonable rules - Reward good behaviour and follow through with consequences. Let your young person know that bullying is unacceptable and that it needs to stop. Assure them that you will support them with this. Talk regularly about what's acceptable and what's not. Set clear boundaries and teach the young person how to take accountability and responsibility for their actions and how to apologize and move forward.

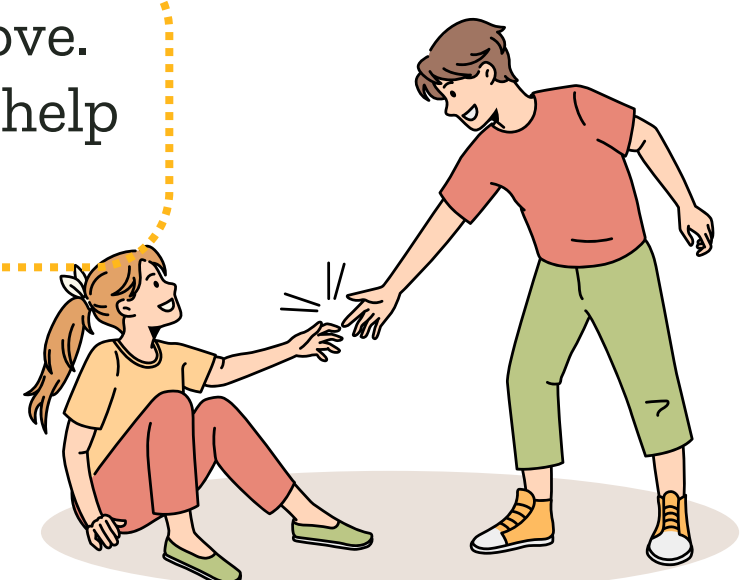
Monitor the child - Supervise the child and give them immediate feedback on their progress. Take your young person's behaviour seriously, don't minimize it. Monitor name-calling and any physical fights between siblings. Notice and acknowledge when children are behaving well.

Create a respectful home - Encourage respectful and kind actions between family members. Create a calm atmosphere at home. Avoid stress and reduce conflict among family members. Encourage kind or neutral words with family and others. Model healthy pro-social ways of dealing with conflict and tension and coach them on how to take space when needed.

Spend time with the child - Nurture your relationship and model positive ways of dealing with conflict. Seek to better understand the things the child may be struggling with. Be involved in your young persons life and spend time developing open communication. Show interest and concern for their feelings.

Make a commitment - Support the child's efforts to improve. Children can't learn without making mistakes. It's how we help them deal with those mistakes that matter.

Get help - If things don't improve, it's a good idea to seek professional advice.





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What NOT to do:

Don't justify the behaviour by saying, "Well, this happened to my child so he was just acting in response." Remember the saying, "two wrongs don't make a right".



Don't look for someone to blame. "She didn't learn that at home. It must be the school's fault!"



Don't say, "I know my child and they would never do that!" You don't necessarily know "who" they are on the playground or at a slumber party.

Don't make direct contact with the alleged victim's parents - this may only inflame the situation.

Don't make positive comments about bullying (e.g., avoid congratulating them for "standing up for themselves") - as this will encourage them to keep doing it.

Don't lecture - a simple statement will get your point across better. "I need you to know that bullying is unacceptable, and it must stop."

