



# Teenhelp

menu

## Being a bystander and helping others out

- What does it mean to be a bystander?
- A girl I know is being bullied in school. I don't join in but I haven't helped either. Is this really bad?
- A friend of mine is being bullied. What should I do?

Q.

### What does it mean to be a bystander?

A.

Some people stand by and watch bullying and people who bully love to have an audience. Those who laugh when someone is being harassed or picked on may as well be doing the bullying themselves as their laughter supports the bully. Others may see the bullying and disapprove of it but do nothing about it.



Ask yourself, have you ever thought some of these things...

- It's none of my business.
- They won't listen to me anyway.
- It's only a bit of fun.
- I don't want to get involved.
- I don't know any of those kids so it's not my problem.
- If I get involved maybe they'll turn on ME.
- Why should I help? No one else is.
- Everyone's laughing, I don't want to say anything or they'll laugh at me.
- Why can't he/she (the victim) just stand up for themselves?

**Being a bystander is giving the message that bullying is ok and allows it to continue.**

*'In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends'.*

**Martin Luther King Jnr**

**Q. A girl I know is being bullied in school. I don't join in but I haven't helped either. Is this really bad?**

**A.**

Think about it from your own perspective. How would you feel if this was happening to you? If you were being bullied what would you want others to do to help you?

Be a friend, stand up for your own principles and do what you believe is right.

*'Last year, I remember laughing when a kid was being bullied. I thought it was easier to join in than to help out. Then it started happening to my little brother. I realised that kids who get bullied need the rest of us to stand up for them. If you're not able to say something, you should walk away at least. You could make a report. Even an anonymous one. Write a note or something.'*

**Eoin, 15**

If you see bullying, it's important that you help out. It's not just up to parents and teachers to sort out.

One of the best ways of ending and preventing bullying is when young people stand up for each other and say **NO** to bullying.

- Refuse to join in.
- Stand up to the person bullying and tell them it's wrong or to back off.
- Support the person being bullied. Help them if they've been hurt.
- Report it. Tell a teacher or another adult as soon as possible.

**Q. A friend of mine is being bullied. What should I do?**

**A.**

If a friend is being bullied they will need your help. Check out [What can I do to stop the bullying](#) for more tips.

- Encourage your friend to talk about it with a trusted adult.
- Suggest that you can help when they make the report. You are a witness and can help describe what's happening.
- If your friend doesn't want to make a report, you should. Be sure to explain that your friend is fearful.
- Be supportive. Listen to your friend and tell them the bullying is wrong and needs to stop.
- Encourage your friend to stay in a group wherever possible.

## Remember

**Breaking the silence is the best way of putting a stop to bullying.**

*'Once, when I was being bullied, this older girl I hardly knew came over and told the bully to back off and cop on. There were a few other kids around and they heard. I think the bully just got really embarrassed. She never came near me after that. The girl who helped just walked off and that was that. It was kinda cool the way it happened.'* Sarah, 13

