



Teenhelp

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What is bullying?

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Q. What is bullying?

A.

- Bullying is when someone is repeatedly picked on or treated unfairly by another person or group of people. It usually involves emotional or physical harm and may happen in school, in youth groups, in the home or over the internet.
- Bullying often happens when adults aren't around, but can just as easily happen when they are. The adults may simply not know what is going on because it is kept hidden.
- Sometimes adults can bully young people or children. This is very difficult, because we expect adults to be fair but, unfortunately, some adults are not.

If you are being bullied, remember, you are not alone. Bullying is a common problem and help is available. ALL bullying is wrong and it is important that you talk about the problem with someone you can trust.

Q. What sort of things could be considered to be bullying?

A.



Bullying involves repeatedly harming someone – emotionally, physically or both. It can involve:

- Physically hurting such as shoving, tripping, pinching or 'mess fighting' in an aggressive way.
- Disrespecting or teasing someone about their race, culture, religion or sexual orientation. This is targeting someone based on their ethnic background, skin colour, beliefs, values or who they may be sexually attracted to. This is discrimination.
- Spreading rumours, making cruel jokes or sending malicious emails or text messages. This includes things posted on social networking sites like Facebook. Check out [cyberbullying](#) for more info and tips about this.
- Excluding someone from a group or encouraging others to leave someone out. Sometimes excluding someone can happen in ways that may not seem particularly obvious, for example, asking opinions in a group but always leaving one person out, or raising your eyes to heaven when someone talks and giving the message that what they say is not important.
- Being insincere or fake with someone – pretending to like them and then laughing behind their back.
- Daring or forcing someone to do something they don't want to.
- Threatening by using actions like glaring, fist clenching or making sounds to cause confusion or upset.
- Jeering at someone if they're doing well in school or struggling with subjects.
- Damaging, hiding or stealing property.
- Demanding money or items while making threats.
- Laughing when someone is being bullied by another. Standing on the sidelines is taking part in bullying.
- Sexual bullying – forcing someone to do things of a sexual nature that they do not want to do. Check out the page on [sexual bullying](#).
- Bullying doesn't just happen at school, it can happen in any place where there are two or more people. A person who bullies could be a friend, a family member, a boyfriend / girlfriend, someone in a position of authority or someone who you think you should be able to trust.

'Sometimes people say "sticks and stones may break your bones but names will never hurt you". This isn't true. Names do hurt. A lot! Sometimes you can hear the words in your head long after it's happened. It can be hard to forget what people say about you and the way people can laugh at you. You just have to try your best not to believe any of it is true.'

Carly, 13



Why do people bully?



There can be a number of reasons why people may choose to bully:

- They feel bad about themselves and use bullying to make them feel in control or powerful.
- Sometimes people who bully do it because someone else is bullying them.
- There may be anger, aggression or violence in their home or neighbourhood.
- They are jealous by nature and are unaware of the hurt and fear they are causing.
- They have poor social skills and do not know how to solve problems in a fair way.

- They lack in self awareness and empathy (understanding the feelings of others).
- They are caught in a cycle of bad behaviour and they do not know how to change.
- They are unhappy, angry or depressed.

Q. Is bullying just a part of growing up?

A.

No, bullying is not a part of growing up. It is a serious problem.

Have you tried talking to someone but they said things like:

- You're making a big deal about it.
- It'll toughen you up.
- It's a part of life.
- Just ignore them.
- It couldn't be THAT bad?

If you are being bullied, then it IS bad and it IS a big deal

Life always has its ups and downs and some problems, if ignored, do pass. Disagreements among friends, changing friendships and experiencing a range of feelings is a part of growing up – we all have good days and bad days. But when most days seem like bad days or problems don't go away this is a bigger issue and you need help.

When you talk to an adult about this serious problem, choose a time when you know they are able to listen and give you their full attention. If the adult is busy or distracted and there is a lot going on, your problem may not be fully heard. It is important that you persist and make yourself heard.

Go to [What to do if you're being bullied](#) for ideas. If you don't get a helpful response from an adult you are talking to, then try to think of someone else who will listen.