

What is Bullying?

Bullying is a conscious, willful, deliberate, hostile and repeated behaviour by one or more people, which is intended to harm others. Bullying takes many forms, and can include many different behaviours, such as:

- physical violence and attacks
- verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs
- threats and intimidation
- extortion or stealing of money and possessions
- exclusion from the peer group

Bullying is the assertion of power through aggression. Its forms change with age: school playground bullying, sexual harassment, gang attacks, date violence, assault, marital violence, child abuse, workplace harassment and elder abuse (Pepler and Craig, 1997)

"Bullying is not about anger. It is not a conflict to be resolved, it's about contempt—a powerful feeling of dislike toward someone considered to be worthless, inferior or undeserving of respect. Contempt comes with three apparent psychological advantages that allow kids to harm others without feeling empathy, compassion or shame. These are: a sense of entitlement, that they have the right to hurt or control others, an intolerance towards difference, and a freedom to exclude, bar, isolate and segregate others"

-Barbara Coloroso "The Bully, the Bullied and the Bystander"

Bullying Myths and Facts:

Myth: "Bullying is just, stage, a normal part of life. I went through it my kids will too."

Fact: Bullying is not "normal" or socially acceptable behaviour. We give bullies power by our acceptance of this behaviour.

Myth: "If I tell someone, it will just make it worse."

Fact: Research shows that bullying will stop when adults in authority and peers get involved.

Myth: "Just stand up for yourself and hit them back"

Fact: While there are some times when people can be forced to defend themselves, hitting back usually makes the bullying worse and increases the risk for serious physical harm.

Myth: "Bullying is a school problem, the teachers should handle it"

Fact: Bullying is a broader social problem that often happens outside of schools, on the street, at shopping centers, the local pool, summer camp and in the adult workplace."

Myth: "People are born bullies"

Fact: Bullying is a learned behaviour and behaviours can be changed.



www.bullying.org is a multiple award-winning Web site that was created to help people around the world deal with the issues of bullying and taunting. www.bullying.org is a supportive international community where people can learn that they are NOT alone in being bullied and taunted, that being bullied and taunted is NOT their fault and that they CAN do something positive about it.

People can contribute their personal stories, poems, images, oral stories (audio files), music, animations and movies. In order to protect contributors' privacy and security, no last names of young people, or personal contact information is published or shared with anyone else.

www.bullying.org also has two moderated, online support groups, one for youth and one for adults

Bullying is a Community Issue, Address It As a Community

Bullying is not a “school” or a “kids” problem per se. It is a broader, community and societal problem. Bullying does happen to youth in the playground, the hallways, the classroom and on the school bus, but is also happens at home, the local pool, hockey rink, summer camp, to adults in the workplace to seniors citizens.

You Can't Do It Alone!

Approach local police force, town council, social services workers, chamber of commerce, school councils, parents and youth groups etc. and invite them to be part of a local anti-bullying committee. Work to bring together all agencies currently providing bullying programs, presentations or bullying related programming. The purpose of your committees meetings will be to map the existing services, identify gaps/needs in programming and ensure a coordinated response to this issue. Make these meetings ongoing.

Try to determine the extent of the problem in your family, school, workplace and community. Begin with an anonymous survey. A survey will help you not only find out how much bullying is going on at that time, it can also be used to determine current attitudes about bullying. It will give you a base line of information that you can use later to see what effects your interventions are having.

Build your plans upon the information you discover. Each organization or community will be different, there is no “One size fits all” solution or magic answer. Design your programs based upon where the survey indicates your group or community is at.

Educate yourself and those you are working with. People think that they understand bullying because they have had experiences with it, either directly or indirectly, but often they are still passing on the same stereotypical detrimental attitudes about bully.



Find out the facts and look for current research about bullying by going to the “Helpful Resources” section of www.bullying.org. Let this research guide your plans.

Build awareness about the issue. Ask people to visit www.bullying.org and invite them to look at the stories, poems, images, audio files, music, and videos that have been shared there from around the world. They can make their own contributions and reply to others in full privacy and security.

Hold conference days and special community events in an effort to further education and awareness about bullying in your community.

In addition to the many free teaching and learning resources that can be found on the www.bullying.org Web site, build up a local set of in-hand resources, that might include books, videos, articles, research papers, a directory of local speakers who can visit local community groups to continue to raise awareness about the seriousness and implications of bullying in your community.

Works towards creating organizations and a broader community that promotes kindness, communication, cooperation, friendship and peace. Provide community groups with the resources and support to develop skills that stress empathy, anger management, and conflict resolution skills.

Have your town/city council sign and publicly proclaim the www.bullying.org **Bullying-Free Community Proclamation**. You can get a copy of this document by contacting help@bullying.org.

Have various community groups, organizations and individuals sign an anti-bullying pledge. You can get a copy of this document by contacting help@bullying.org.

Have all signatories register themselves, their community and local organizations at www.bullying.org.

Set short term and long term goals. Research shows that the climate and a culture of an organization and a community take time and consistent attention.

Your community must make it safe for citizens to report bullying.

Some communities such as Edmonton and Calgary, Alberta (Canada) are adopting anti-bullying bylaws. Organizational and community rules about bullying should be simple and clear. There should be immediate and consistent consequences for bullying incidents. Bullies should be made aware of the effects that their bullying has had on the victims, the victims' family and that their behaviour affects the entire community. They should understand that such behaviour is unacceptable by the community. They should pay for any damaged belongings.

Bullies and victims should be talked to separately. The victims concerns should be heard first. If more than one person is involved, talk to each person separately in quick succession (expect bullies to minimize and deny their actions). Remind the bystanders that there are no innocent bystanders and they are expected to be part of the solution in preventing bullying in your community. Reassure the victim that everything possible will be done to prevent an occurrence.

Contact the families of both the victim and the bully as soon as possible. Continue to monitor the behaviour of both the bully and the victim. If the situation does not change, remove the bully, not the victim from the immediate environment.

Consult with other your local anti-bullying community committee to alert them to the problem and to work on a coordinated, community response. Make your local efforts a permanent part of your community's response to bullying.

Implement strategies that have a positive effect on the community that include, but go beyond the problem of bullying.

