

BULLYING ABUSE: INFORMATION FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS



What is Bullying Abuse?¹

- Bullying abuse is **unwanted** acts of aggression that are mean or hurtful to another person from a peer or group of peers
 - Is repeated multiple times or is likely to be repeated
 - Involves one person (or more) thinking they have power over someone else
- Bullying can be:
 - Direct forms of aggression that occur face to face. This includes:
 - Physical acts that hurt people, such as kicking, punching, hitting, or shoving; or physically damaging a person's belongings to cause harm
 - Verbal acts that hurt people, such as calling people names
 - Indirect forms of aggression that occur behind the persons back
 - Relational acts that hurt people by hurting their friendships with others, such as spreading rumors or gossip
 - Cyberbullying: bullying that occurs on the internet, such as spreading rumors or posting harmful pictures to make fun of someone
- Bullying is NOT where two people have a disagreement or misunderstanding. It is different from playful teasing where both people see it as fun.

Who is Impacted by Bullying?

- Students have reported that about **1 out of 5** children and adolescents are victims of bullying.²
- Students report that the most bullying happens in middle school.³
- The most common form of bullying is being made fun of or insulted, followed by having rumors spread about them.⁴
- Only about half of students report being bullied to an adult.
 - But other students see 85% of bullying! Bystanders sometimes join in or ignore what is happening, but a small number stand up!
- Bullying can happen in school, during events, on the bus, in the neighborhood, on the Internet, or a combination of all of these.¹
- Bullying most often happens in school hallways or the stairwell, followed by the classroom and cafeteria, and on the school grounds, the bus, or in the bathroom or locker room.⁴

What Do Aggressors Do?₅

- They may say mean things about other people, such as calling them names or spreading rumors.
- They may lack empathy for others.
- They may have a strong need to get their way.
- They may be easily angered or frustrated.
- They tend to be overly concerned with popularity.
- They may blame others for their problems and not take responsibility for their actions.
- Kids who assist may serve as an assistant to the child who bullies, by encouraging behavior or joining in.
- Kids who reinforce give the aggressor an audience, by laughing or providing support for the aggressor.

What About Children Who Are Bullied?₅

- Children can be bullied for anything that makes them seem different from others. They may look or act differently than others.
- Children who are bullied may be seen as weak or unable to defend themselves, or are seen as less popular than others.
- Children who are bullied are more likely to have negative effects, such as anxiety or low self-esteem.
- Children who are bullied may participate in bullying of other students

How Can You Help?

- **How to help yourself if it is happening to you:**
 - Reach out for help, be responsible and report it to an adult
 - Clearly tell the other person to stop; you can say “Stop”, “Enough”, or “Give it a rest”
 - Stay close to trusted adults and friends—talk to a teacher, parent, counselor, or school psychologist.
- **How to help others if it is happening to them: be an upstander!₅**
 - You can be a good friend to someone who is being bullied by standing up for them, be an upstander!
 - Upstanders can make a big difference for someone who is bullied by making them feel liked and supported
 - Question the bullying behavior
 - Use humor to redirect the conversation
 - Intervene as a group to show there are many people who don’t agree with the bullying: strength in numbers
 - Reach out privately to check in with the person who is bullied

REFERENCES

[1] Gladden, R.M., Vivolo-Kantor, A.M., Hamburger, M.E., & Lumpkin, C.D. (2014). *Bullying Surveillance Among Youths: Uniform Definitions for Public Health and Recommended Data Elements, Version 1.0*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and U.S. Department of Education. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/bullying-definitions-final-a.pdf>

[2] Indicator 10: Bullying at School and Electronic Bullying. (2019, April). nces.ed.gov/programs/crimeindicators/ind_10.asp

[3] Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2018). *Preventing Bullying*. <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/bullying-factsheet508.pdf>

[4] Musu-Gillette, L., Zhang, A., Wang, K., Zhang, J., & Oudekerk, B.A. (2017). *Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2016* (NCES 2017-064/NCJ 250650). National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, and Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/2017064.pdf>

[5] stopbullying.gov/

How Can You Prevent Bullying?



- **Treat others with respect—use kind words!**
- **Think before you speak, type, or text.**
- **Talk to an adult or friend!**
- **If you have hurt someone else, be responsible and try to make up for it.**