



BULLYING ABUSE: INFORMATION FOR HIGH 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
 - Happens 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 person's 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 bullying peaks in middle school and decreases slightly in high school.³
 - High school students are most likely to be bullied based on sexual or gender identity.⁵
- 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.²
 - 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.

What Do Aggressors Do?⁵

- They may lack empathy for others
- They may blame others for their problems and not take responsibility for their actions.
- They may be overly concerned with their social status and popularity.

- Students who assist may serve as an assistant to the child who bullies, by encouraging behavior or joining in.
- Students who reinforce give the aggressor an audience, by laughing or providing support for the students who bully.

What About Children Who Are Bullied?⁵

- Students can be bullied for anything that makes them seem different from others. They may look or act differently than others.
- Students are most often bullied for their looks, race, ethnicity, gender, disability, religion, or sexual orientation

- Students who are bullied may be seen as weak or unable to defend themselves, or are seen as less popular than others
- Students who are bullied are more likely to have negative effects, such as anxiety or low self-esteem.
- Students 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., Vivo-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.**