

Bullying: Information Awareness for Parents and Guardians

What is Bullying?

Bullying is any act with the intent of hurting, humiliating, or excluding someone physically, mentally or emotionally. Bullying is typically intentional, repeated and persistent, and is known to have a negative impact on mental health with immediate and long-lasting effects. Children and adolescents who are bullied are at risk of developing depression, suicidal thoughts, anxiety, substance abuse, truancy, and aggression.

Bullying Facts:

- 1 in 3 adolescents in Canada report recent bullying; the 9th highest rate in the developed world.
- An Ontario study reported that 30% of grade 9 -12 students were bullied at school.
- 47% of Canadian parents report their child experienced bullying.
- 78% of Canadians believe that not enough is being done to stop bullying in their community.
- 60% of males who bully in school have criminal records by the age of 24.
- When peers intervene most incidents stop within 10 seconds.
- Non-heterosexual students have a 3-times higher bullying rate.
- Girls are more likely to be bullied on the Internet than boys.
- 25% of Canadian kids admit to cyber-bullying.

Types of Bullying:

Physical Bullying: pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking, spitting, tripping, pinching, stealing, and damaging property or other kinds of force.

Verbal Bullying: name-calling, mocking, teasing, threatening, insulting, or using derogatory comments.

Social Bullying: isolating or ostracizing, spreading rumors, gossiping, manipulating friendships, or using the “silent treatment.”

Cyber-bullying: spreading verbal or social bullying via text messages, social media or the internet. This also includes the impersonation of another individual in messages, websites, or blogs.

Sexual Bullying: sexual intimidation, unwanted sexual comments, suggestions, advances, or threats to another person.

Victimization among LGBTQ Youth: discrimination, violence and making fun of the sexual orientation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, two spirited and queer/questioning individuals.

Signs that may indicate that your child is being bullied:

- Changes from their usual behaviour (i.e. withdrawn or argumentative).
- Making negative comments about self (i.e. low self-esteem).
- Feeling sick (i.e. stomach-ache or headache) in the morning or reluctant /refusing to go to school.
- Coming home with unexplained cuts, bruises, or other injuries or damaged personal items.
- Nightmares or disturbed sleep.
- Easily Frustrated.
- Avoiding taking usual route to school.
- Social withdrawal and isolation

What to do if your child is being bullied:

- Let them know it is not their fault, it can be stopped and it is okay to ask for help.
- Talk and listen to your child's concerns.
- Ask questions about their day; regularly check-in with them.
- Speak to your child's teacher and principal about your concern for your child's safety.
- Encourage your child to talk to trusted adults who can help them.
- Teach your child assertiveness and social interactional skills.
- Foster resilience by teaching self-care, helping others, developing supportive friendships, encourage self-discovery and accept change as a part of life

Signs that may indicate that your child is bullying others:

- Harasses or teases siblings or adults. Has little concern for feelings of others
- Becomes easily frustrated.
- Uses physical aggression to intimidate.
- Exhibits domineering and manipulative behaviour.
- Boasts about intimidating behaviour.
- Engages in cruelty to animals.
- Belongs to a group of predominately aggressive peers.
- Comes home with things that do not belong to them.

What to do if your child is bullying:

- Take the problem seriously.
- Talk to your child about their behaviour.
- Use non-violent consequences that teach and encourage empathy by setting guidelines and limits for unacceptable behaviour.
- Discuss the negative impact this behaviour has on others.
- Teach them way to resolve conflict without the use of aggression.
- Do not expose them to violent behaviour amongst family members.
- Increase supervision of your child with their friends.
- Spend time doing activities with your child that foster healthy relationships.
- Seek help if you are concerned with your child's mental health.

Ways to Prevent Further Bullying:

- Talk often and openly with your child - letting them know you are there to support them.
- Help to create a positive environment that promotes your child's ability to create and maintain healthy relationships.
- Enroll your child in athletic or social activities that they may have an interest in to build their confidence and meet other like-minded youth.
- Encourage your child to be assertive, but not aggressive. Coaching and role-playing can help children learn assertive responses.
- Provide opportunities for your child to use their strengths in activities that use their leadership skills in a positive way.
- Practice tolerance and model the use of positive power by respecting and supporting others.
- Encourage positive relationships by praising respectful and inclusive behaviour whenever you see it.
- Demonstrate tolerance and respectful behaviour towards all sexualities and diverse backgrounds.
- Surround your child with people who will support or stand up for them. (i.e. enroll your child in a school or activity that supports minority issues.)
- Encourage your child to get extra support from a mental health councillor.

Resources:

Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868
LGBT Youthline: 1-800-268-9688
Kingston Crisis Line: 613-544-4229 or 1-866-616-6005
Tele-health: 1-866-797-0000
Mental Health Helpline: 1-866-531-2600

Online Resources:

PREVNet: www.prevnet.ca

Kids Help Phone: www.kidshelpphone.ca

Stop a Bully: www.stopabully.ca

Bullying.org: www.bullying.org

The Canadian Safe School Network: www.canadiansafeschools.com

E.R.A.S.E. Bullying: www.erasebullying.ca

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