

Are You Being Bullied?

What to Know

School is a challenging time for many kids, and if you're being bullied, it might be even more difficult for you. How do you know if you're being bullied? When someone is:

- being unkind or aggressive - verbally, socially, physically, or behaving this way online
- using physical strength, popularity, or access to embarrassing information to control or harm you
- doing these things repeatedly

Bullying also includes making threats, spreading rumors, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

Bullying can have serious long-term consequences like depression, anxiety, and more. So, what can you do?

1. **Be confident.**

- stand up straight when walking through the hallways at school
- make eye contact and smile
- find ways to increase your self-esteem, like doing hobbies or after-school activities

2. Stay near adults. If adults are nearby, bullies will stay away because they usually don't want to cause trouble for themselves. For example, you might eat lunch close to the table where teachers sit.

3. Hang out in groups. Bullies are often less likely to target big groups of friends. If you're involved with other kids who share your interests, such as in a club or sports team, you can spend time with them throughout the day.

4. If possible, avoid bullies. If you know which kids tend to bully others, stay away from them. Sometimes, bullies show up in areas you can't avoid. For example, if your locker is next to a bully's locker ask to move to a different locker.

5. Don't bully back. If you want to avoid being bullied, avoid bullying others. Escalating the situation can be dangerous and will only give the bully the reaction they want. Take a few deep breaths before you react.

6. Ignore the bully. Bullies enjoy getting a reaction. You can pretend you don't notice, and the bully may get bored if you don't react.

7. Stand up for yourself. If the bully doesn't back down when you ignore them, speak calmly and slowly, and use a loud, clear voice to let the bully know you don't like their behavior. Say something like, "Stop doing that now," and walk away.

8. Find someone to talk to. While you might be able to ignore the bully, or even stand up for yourself, it's important to share what's happening with an adult.

- Talk to your parent, who can contact the school.
- Talk to a teacher, counselor, or coach who can advocate for you.
- If you speak to one adult and they don't act, reach out to another adult that will.

9. Disengage. If you are being bullied online, ignore or block the bully. Delete the messages and posts after sharing them with an adult. If the situation is severe, you may consider deleting your social media accounts.

10. Don't share your passwords. If someone can get onto your accounts, they can create problems for you. Keep your passwords a secret. Only you and your parents should know your passwords to your email and social media accounts.

11. Adjust your privacy settings. If someone is bullying you online, change your privacy settings on your profiles so you can post things that only your friends can see. Only add close, trusted friends on social media.

12. Think about the content you post. Share personal information via email or private messages. Avoid posting anything aggressive toward other classmates. Rant to a friend if you're mad about something instead of posting it online.

13. Join or start a club to help reduce bullying. Many groups are dedicated to addressing bullying in schools. If your school has an anti-bullying group, sign up. You can also start a group.

14. Strengthen your current friendships. Instead of focusing on people who are mean to you, focus on the people who care about you. If you have strong, secure friendships, it will be easier to ignore the bullies.

What to Do

In this activity you'll create your own anti-bullying plan. Fill in the next page and make a copy to give to your parents and other trusted adults like a teacher or coach.

My Anti-Bullying Plan

Name: _____ Date: _____

Here are the things I can do to build my confidence:

Trusted adults I can talk to in school:

Other adults that can help me:

Friends or groups I can hang out with in school:

Here are the things I can do to avoid bullies:

Here's what I will do and say when I'm approached by a bully:

Here are the things I can do when I'm online to stay safe:
