

# Dealing with Name-Calling

## What to Know

Sometimes when someone is mad or frustrated, they call others mean names. They might not realize the consequences of what that name feels like to the person being called it. They say hurtful things without thinking about how it will make the other person feel. Once they name-call, there is no taking it back. Someone's feelings have already been hurt.

Name-calling is never okay. It's hurtful and can make others feel sad, humiliated, unloved, or worthless.

If you are being called mean names by someone, you may feel helpless and confused about how to handle the situation. Here are some tips to cope.

**Tell the person to stop calling you names.** Avoid getting into an argument or getting emotional. Tell the person what they are doing needs to stop. They might try to make it seem like the name is a harmless nickname. It's not harmless if it hurts your feeling. No one has the right to give you hurtful nicknames.

**Don't allow the name-caller to dismiss your request.** You have the right to ask them to only call you by the name you go by. You're not being too sensitive to not want to be called names.

**Avoid the person.** Even if you can't completely avoid the name-caller, you can walk or sit in a group. If a person is calling you names online, print the evidence, or take a screenshot. Then, block the person.

**Ignore the insult.** Just because someone calls you a name, it doesn't make it true. Shrug it off and walk away to take the power away from the name-caller.

**Control your anger.** The person may want to push you to react in anger or sadness. Your reaction is the reward for their negative behavior, so try not to react. You can:

- count to 10 slowly in your head.
- take deep breaths, in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- repeat to yourself, "I am calm."
- imagine something funny happening to the name-caller, like a giant container of slime being poured over their head.

**Involve a trusted adult.** Tell a teacher or coach. Ask for help if you have tried to make the name-calling stop and it continues. It's also important to talk to an adult if you feel like you are in danger.

## What to Do

First, answer the questions.

Have you ever been called a name? \_\_\_\_\_

How did it make you feel?

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Is this a problem at school? At home? Out in the community? Who can you talk to about the name-calling?

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Have you ever called someone else a name? \_\_\_\_\_

How were you feeling when you called them a name?

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How do you think it made them feel?

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You can't control if someone calls you names, but you can control how you react. Find ways to calm yourself before you escalate to the point where you start name-

calling. Brainstorm some ways you can calm yourself when someone calls you a name and you start to get angry. Two ideas are written below. Fill in the rest of the boxes.

1. Take deep breaths	3.	5.
2. Walk away	4.	6.

Describe a recent incident when someone called you a name.

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Now that you know ways you can react, how would you have handled the situation differently?

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What will you do in the future if someone calls you a name? Be specific.

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