



BULLYING: Support for Parents

What is bullying?

Bullying happens when someone hurts another person physically, socially, or emotionally. Bullying can look different at different ages. Sometimes bullying can be easy to see but usually it isn't. Often, it may not seem like bullying, even to the person doing it. A child, teacher, or parent might call it teasing or "part of growing up." **Whatever it looks like, it is a problem that affects everyone involved, even after the bullying is over.**

What kinds of bullying are there?

Physical bullying: hitting, pushing, kicking, etc.

Verbal bullying: name-calling, belittling, threatening, etc.

Social bullying: spreading rumors, gossiping, ignoring, excluding, destroying relationships, etc.

Cyber bullying: using technology to bully (texts, Facebook, emails, etc).

Why does bullying happen?

Bullying is a relationship problem –to self, others, and the community. Bullying is an abuse of power. It can be random but can also be caused by differences in race, sexuality, religion, disabilities and abilities, or anything that creates a difference between one child and another. **Bullying can stop when everyone involved makes an effort to stop it.**

What should I know about bullying?

- In Canada at least 1 in 10 kids bully others regularly.
- 1 in 3 children have been bullied.
- About one-third of bullied children will bully others.
- Bullying can lead to social and emotional problems for the giver, receiver and witness.

Is your child being bullied?

A child who is being bullied will often act differently, such as:

- Being withdrawn, anxious, angry, or unhappy.
- Missing school and other activities.
- Having headaches and stomach aches.
- Showing physical signs – bruising, ripped clothes, etc.
- Asking for money to replace school materials.
- Being unusually aggressive with siblings or pets.
- Having trouble sleeping, nightmares.

How can I help my child who is being bullied? **ACT!**

Acknowledge your child's problem. Take their problem seriously. Let them know you will help.

Consider who in your child's life can help them: friends, teachers, family, Elders or others in the community.

Talk to your child about what is happening. Work with your child to come up with some solutions. They've come to you because they need help. Show them they are loved and valued. Also talk to people in your community who can help.

ACT! with your community

If bullying has entered your child's life, it has entered yours, too. Bullying involves more than just two people. To deal with it, you need to get other people's support.

1. **Talk to your child's teacher and principal.** Help them understand that bullying is serious. Ask if the school has any plans or policies in place to deal with bullying.
2. **Talk to a counsellor or encourage your child to do so.** Maybe you or your child needs outside help.



3. **Talk to other parents.** Find out if bullying is something they have dealt with or if they have any ideas.
4. **Talk to community leaders.** If it is not being dealt with by the school, maybe a community-wide policy or campaign can be created.
5. **Talk to Elders.**

Is there bullying at your child's school?

Even if your child is not affected by bullying directly, they are aware of it. Children who see bullying can make a difference. Over half of the time when children step in, the bullying will stop within 10 seconds (PREVNet). You can teach your child to stand up when bullying is happening around them by:

1. Being assertive (not aggressive) with the person doing the bullying by telling them to stop.
2. Supporting the bullied child by saying what is happening to them is not fair and not their fault.
3. Reporting the bullying to a responsible adult, like a teacher.

Is your child bullying others?

Where can I, as a parent, start?

Bullying can be something your child has learned. Some children bully others because they have seen people in their family and/or community use power to control and hurt others. Some children bully because they have been bullied themselves. Bullying is a relationship problem. Your relationship with your child can also be part of the solution. Ask yourself:

- How is your relationship with your child? Do they feel safe talking to you about their problems? Is the time you spend with your child a good experience for both of you?
- Do people in your family act with respect towards each other and to other people? What does your child learn from you?

How can I help my child who is bullying others?

- Talk to them - about relationships, respect and bullying.
- Spend quality time with your child. Know them *and* their friends.
- Get them involved in positive activities, especially ones that have positive role models.
- Praise them when they do well.

Consequences of Bullying

On the child being bullied: Being bullied can affect everything about a child: how they see their friends, school, future, and themselves. This can lead to bad grades and depression, and possibly a child hurting him or herself.

On the bully: Children who bully can lose their connection with other people. They can think rules don't apply to them. This can lead to trouble at school, with the law, and with you.

On others: Even if a child isn't being bullied, they can be affected by it. No one can do well when they feel unsafe.

What do Indigenous Elders say about bullying?

Bullying doesn't fit with Indigenous beliefs. Indigenous knowledge sees all creation as being equal and connected. All living things should be in balance and harmony. A child who understands the Indigenous way will understand the value of others and the responsibility they have toward others. Respect and kindness is at the heart of Indigenous values. Respect is necessary to live in balance and harmony with yourself, others, and the community. Cultural activities stress community, family, and self.

Where can I get information and help?

Kids Help Phone is a great resource for parents and kids 5–20 years old. Counsellors are there 24/7 to help kids talk about their problems. www.kidshelpphone.ca 1-800-688-6868

Prevnet has excellent parent and teacher information and research findings. www.prevnet.ca

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- Dumont, J. (2005, February). *First Nations Regional Longitudinal Health Survey (RHS) Cultural Framework*. Ottawa (ON): RHS.
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- Nishnawbe Aski Nation. (2005). Stand up for yourself and for others. *Anti-Bullying Newsletter*, 1(1).
- PREVNet. (2007). *Bullying in schools: Guidelines for intervention and prevention*. Kingston (ON): PREVNet.

For more information: www.naho.ca/bullying

