

## WHAT IS BULLYING?

- Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children.
- The behavior is repeated (or has the potential to be repeated) over time. It also involves a real or perceived imbalance of power.
- Bullying is considered cyberbullying if it is done over social media or text messaging.
- Examples of bullying include making threats, spreading rumors, physically or verbally attacking someone, or excluding someone from a group on purpose.

## QUICK FACTS

- Children who are bullied, or who bully others, may have serious and long-lasting psychological and behavioral problems.
- Adults who are quick, decisive, and consistent when responding to bullying can send a message that this behavior is not acceptable. Research shows that this can stop bullying behavior over time.
- Recent nationwide data indicates that:
  - 22% of students ages 12-18 have experienced bullying.
  - 19.5% of students in grades 9-12 report that in the last 12 months, they have been bullied on school property.
  - 16% of students in grades 9-12 report that they have been cyberbullied.

## TYPES OF BULLYING

- **Verbal:** Teasing, name calling, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting, threatening harm.
- **Social:** Excluding someone on purpose, telling other kids to not be someone's friend, embarrassing someone in public.
- **Physical:** Hitting, kicking, pinching, spitting, tripping, pushing, making mean or rude hand gestures.
- **Damage to property:** Theft, alteration of property, damage to property, taking or breaking someone's things.

## WHO IS AT RISK OF BEING BULLIED?

Some groups are at an increased risk of being bullied, such as LGBTQIA+ youth, youth with disabilities, and socially isolated youth. In general, children and youth who are bullied will have 1 or more of the following risk factors:

- They are depressed, anxious, or have low self-esteem.
- They are less popular than others.
- They have few friends.
- Peers see them as annoying or attention-seeking.
- Peers see them as being "different," such as being overweight, new at school, or unable to afford things that kids consider "cool."
- Peers perceive them as weak or unable to defend themselves.

CEO Inqguide Company

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Call 910-862-6900 today to speak to someone who can help.

## WHO IS MORE LIKELY TO BULLY OTHERS?

Children and youth are more likely to bully others if they have 1 or more of the following risk factors:

- They have issues at home or less parental involvement.
- They have trouble following rules.
- They are easily frustrated or aggressive.
- They have a low opinion of others.
- They view violence as something good.
- They have friends who bully others.

## SIGNS THAT SOMEONE MIGHT BE BULLYING OTHERS

Warning signs that a child or youth may be bullying others include:

- Getting into physical or verbal fights.
- Having friends who bully others.
- Becoming increasingly aggressive.
- Frequently getting sent to the principal's office or to detention.
- Blaming others for their problems.
- Not accepting responsibility for their actions.
- Being competitive and worrying about their reputation or popularity.
- Coming home with unexplained extra money or new belongings.

## SIGNS OF BEING BULLIED OR CYBERBULLIED

Warning signs that a child or youth may be the target of bullying:

- Unexplainable injuries.
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewelry.
- Frequent headaches or stomachaches.
- Fakes being sick.
- Sudden changes to eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating. Kids may be hungry when they come home from school.
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares.
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school.
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations.
- Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home.
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self-esteem.
- Noticeable increases or decreases in device use, such as texting.
- Exhibiting emotions (laughter, anger, frustration) in response to what is happening on their device.
- Hiding their screen or device when others are nearby.
- Avoiding discussions about what they are doing on their device.
- Shutting down social media accounts and creating new ones.
- Avoiding social situations, even those that they enjoyed in the past.
- Becoming withdrawn, depressed, or losing interest in people and activities.

## TAKE ACTION

If you have reason to believe your child is being bullied or bullying others, the sooner you address the issue, the better the outcome for your child.

- You can reach out to your child's school counselor, pediatrician, primary care physician, or a mental health professional.
- Remember that early intervention is always best for your child's health and well-being.

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