



Bullying Facts & Solutions*



Bullying is a form of abuse at the hands of peers that can take different forms at different ages. Bullying is targeted and repeated. It involves power, aggression, intimidation and shame. Bullying does not need to be physical in order to be hurtful. Physical bullying may be present during the elementary school years, while more covert forms such as social and cyber-bullying may occur during high school.

Bullying is a complex problem that requires a multitude of approaches. The following are some facts known about bullying as well as some solutions for consideration.

Fact	Solution
<p><i>Bullying causes serious harm</i> Children and adolescents who are involved in bullying (either as an aggressor, as a victim, or both) are at risk for a number of emotional and behavioural problems.</p>	<p>Bullying is a disrespectful peer relationship problem. It is essential to identify and help children early. Both those who bully and those at risk of being bullied need support to ensure they develop healthy relationships.</p>
<p><i>Children do not grow out of bullying</i> Without intervention, the nature of bullying changes. As thinking and social skills develop, children become aware of others' vulnerabilities and of their own power relative to others.</p>	<p>Early identification and intervention of bullying will prevent patterns of aggressive interactions. Adults need to be aware that bullying changes with age and may become more difficult to detect.</p>
<p><i>Bullying affects the majority of our children</i> Statistics suggest that a classroom of 35 students, between 4 and 6 children are bullying and/or are being bullied. Many more children observe bullying and know that it is going on</p>	<p>To ensure that children have healthy and productive relationships, bullying prevention programs may be implemented. These are strategies that support all children, whether they are bullying, being bullied or witnessing bullying.</p>
<p><i>Reporting bullying is an effective way to stop the violence</i> Secrecy empowers children who bully. Once a bullying relationship is established, attempts to make the bullying stop are often unsuccessful and may make the bullying worse.</p>	<p>Children need to be encouraged to report bullying and be given multiple strategies on how to report. Adults must convey the message they want to know what the child experienced and that they are available to help stop the bullying.</p>
<p><i>Fighting back makes the bullying worse</i> Research shows that when children use aggressive strategies to manage bullying situations, they often experience prolonged and more severe bullying interactions as a result.</p>	<p>Children should be encouraged to be assertive, not aggressive. They should tell a trusted adult what has happened to them or someone else. An assertive message is clear and respectful. It does not put down or insult the person who is bullying. Coaching and role playing can help children learn assertive responses.</p>
<p><i>Bullying can occur within the family or at home</i> Bullying within family relationships is termed <i>child abuse</i>, <i>elder abuse</i> or <i>intimate partner violence</i>. The family is the first context in which children learn about relationships. Lessons learned in the family context provide the foundation for future relationships.</p>	<p>It is important for children to see and experience secure and healthy relationships. Adults should model respectful relationships and take responsibility for the well being of those who are dependent and vulnerable. Both within and beyond the family, adults can help to promote healthy relationships and prevent bullying and abuse.</p>
<p><i>Peers play a major role in bullying</i> Children who are bystanders learn about the negative use of power and aggression in relationships. Overtime, bullying behaviour becomes "normalized". With a captive audience, a child who is bullying receives the attention of peers and this brings social status.</p>	<p>Change bystanders into heroes! Help children understand their social responsibility to do something when they know someone is being bullied. Adults can coach kids to collectively take a stand and step in assertively. When more than one child steps in, it helps to shift the power imbalance. When children do not feel safe or comfortable standing up to those who bully, they should be encouraged to report the bullying to an adult.</p>

Adults play an integral role in creating positive environments to promote children and youth's ability to create and maintain healthy relationships. By helping develop essential social skills that navigate peer conflicts. This helps towards minimizing opportunities for negative peer interactions. Adults can help adjust the imbalance of power inherent in bullying relationships.

* Adapted from resources found at www.prevnet.ca - Canada's authority for research and resources for bullying prevention