

Stand Strong Against Bullying

Tips, Facts, and Tactics

Family Tip Sheet | Middle and High School

Introduction

Bullying peaks during the middle school years. It's a time of dramatic physical, emotional, intellectual, and social change. Your teen is struggling to live up to his or her potential and establish a unique identity while navigating the uncharted waters of an ever-shifting social environment. You can help your teen chart his or her course by joining together to understand what bullying is—and isn't—and developing prevention strategies to stand strong against it.

Experts agree that bullying conduct has three key characteristics: power, intent, and repetition. The bully has more power than his or her target. The bully decides to hurt the target through his or her words or actions. The bullying conduct happens more than once, or there is the threat it will happen again. If one of these characteristics is missing, the conduct is not bullying.

Table Talk

To open up the lines of communication, try these conversation starters:

1. Which is worse: cyberbullying or bullying face-to-face?
2. What is the difference between bullying and being mean?
3. Is a person who sees bullying happen and does not speak up guilty of bullying?
4. What would you change about your school's procedure for reporting bullying?
5. How would you expect a [parent, teacher, principal, etc.] to respond to a bullying report?

Tips & Tricks

Bullying has a negative impact on everyone it touches.

- **Is your teen a *target*?** Be aware of changes in your teen's emotions, actions, and habits. Physical injuries, loss of personal belongings, depression, or fear of school or other students may indicate your teen is being bullied. Let your teen know you support him or her 100%.
- **Is your teen a *bystander*?** Witnesses to bullying often exhibit similar changes as the targets themselves. Reassure your teen it is okay to speak up.
- **Is your teen a *bully*?** If your teen is exhibiting bullying tendencies, such as acting aggressively, speaking ill of other students, or intentionally excluding others, talk to him or her about the situation.

Plan & Practice

Help your teen build confidence and develop assertive communication skills by discussing past, present, or potential bullying scenarios. Ask your teen to decide what he or she would do as the target, bully, or a bystander.

Think of a time when you, your teen, or someone known to one of you:

- Had an embarrassing nickname
- Became afraid to go to school
- Avoided certain areas of school (stairwell, hallway, etc.)
- Became the subject of gossip
- Succumbed to pressure to shun a peer
- Supported someone who was bullying another person
- Ignored an opportunity to help a target of bullying

Review the following anti-bullying tactics with your teen:

- Remain calm.
- Be assertive and ask the person who is bullying to stop.
- If the bullying does not stop, walk away and tell an adult in person or anonymously.
- If a person is being physically hurt, report it to an adult as quickly as possible.

Learn More

- ***Stopbullying.gov, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services***

www.stopbullying.gov

An overview of bullying, including definition, prevention strategies, and information on anti-bullying laws and policies in your state.

- ***The Parents' Guide to Texting, Facebook, and Social Media***

by Shawn Marie Edgington

A straightforward look at today's digital world and how families can help their teens prevent and respond to cyberbullying.

- ***Pacer Center's Teens Against Bullying***

www.pacerteensagainstabullying.org/#/home

An interactive website for teens, including information about bullying, quizzes, real-life experiences, polls, and a creative writing component where teens share advice, poetry, and stories.