

# Facts About Bullying for High School Students

## What Is Bullying?

- Bullying is a form of aggressive behavior directed towards a specific student by someone with more power. It is intended to cause, harm, distress and/or create fear.<sup>1</sup>
- Bullying usually happens over and over and can take any of these forms:<sup>2</sup>
  - Physical acts that hurt people such as hitting, kicking, punching or shoving.
  - Verbal acts that hurt people such as calling people names.
  - Acts that are indirect but still hurt people. Examples are ganging up on someone, excluding, spreading rumors or gossiping.
  - Cyberbullying (using computers or cell phones to post harmful pictures or rumors).<sup>3</sup>
- Bullying abuse is *not* where two people have a disagreement or misunderstanding. It is different from playful teasing where both people see it as fun.

## How Often Does Bullying Happen?

- Students have reported that about 1 out of 3 children and adolescents report bullying others or are victims of bullying.<sup>4</sup>
- Bullying occurs more in middle school and when students move to new schools.<sup>5,6</sup>
- Students see 85% of bullying! Bystanders sometimes join in or ignore it- a small number stand up!

## What Do Bullies Do?<sup>2</sup>

- They may lack empathy and may need to get their own way.
- They are easily angered and use their power to hurt others.
- They may refuse to admit that they bullied or blame others.

## What about Children Who Are Bullied?

- Students can be bullied for anything that makes them seen as *different* or *easily hurt*. They may be different in how they look or think. They may be different in how they act or practice their religion.
- Students who are bullied are more likely to become sad and nervous.<sup>3,7</sup>
- Sometimes students who are bullied will bully others.

## How to Prevent It from Happening

- Treat others with respect - use kind words. Think before you speak, type or text!
- If you are feeling angry think about something else, talk to a friend or adult or write down how you feel.
- If you have hurt someone else, be responsible and try to make up for it.

## If It Is Happening to YOU try one of these actions

- Reach out for help. Stay close to adults and trusted friends. Be responsible and report it to a teacher, parent, counselor, or school psychologist.
- Try not to show if it makes you upset as that can make it worse - make a joke of it.
- Stand up straight, look the person in the eye. In calm, clear voice say “Stop,” “Get a life,” “Enough,” or “Give it a rest.”

## Help Others if It Is Happening to Them - Be an Upstander!

- Stand up against bullying! You can take many actions to stop bullying. Your actions may cause the student(s)' bullying to stop if you: 1) report the incident, 2) ask a teacher or another adult for help and/or 3) support, console or take the side of the student(s) being bullied.
- Band together as a group against bullying. Say, "That's not OK", "Just stop already," "Hey, he's cool- don't bother him," or "We don't do that here."
- Tell an adult about the bullying. Telling and reporting are important because someone is acting in an unsafe or hurtful way to another. Telling is different from tattling when someone just wants to get another in trouble.
- Reach out to someone who is bullied. Say something such as "I am sorry that happened," "Want to hang out?" or "Don't believe what they say."

## Take an Active Stand - Participate and Learn More!

- Write a story, create a video, encourage all of the student body to sign a petition, or pledge to stop bullying. Check out: [www.pacer.org/bullying/digitalpetition](http://www.pacer.org/bullying/digitalpetition) | [wearethesolution.net](http://wearethesolution.net)
- Hold a contest in your school about bullying prevention. Entries could take the form of a video, story, poem, artwork or audio clip and express how students feel about bullying, how bullying affects students and the school, and/or what has been done to prevent bullying. Post the winners on your school's website. Check out: <http://www.storiesofus.com/about.html>
- Play a game, read a cartoon, watch a video, share a story | Speak Up Stop Bullying Cartoon Network [www.cartoonnetwork.com/promos/stopbullying/index.html](http://www.cartoonnetwork.com/promos/stopbullying/index.html)
- Plan a talent show, walk, or run - events do not have to be long to have an impact!

## For Help, Here Are Some Local Resources

- Catholic Charities | (716) 218-1400
- Child & Adolescent Treatment Services Intake | (716) 835-7807
- Child & Family Services | (716) 842-750
- Prevention Focus/Teen Focus | (716) 884-3256
- Erie County Council for the Prevention of Alcohol & Substance Abuse | (716) 831-2298
- Mental Health Association of Erie County | (716) 886-1242

## Hotlines and Referrals for Students in Crisis

- 1-800-273-TALK (Suicide Lifeline)
- 1-866-4-U-Trevor (LGBTQ Youth Suicide Hotline) [www.crisischat.org](http://www.crisischat.org) (Text)
- 1-800-246-7743 (LYRIC Youth Talkline)
- 716-834-1144 or 1-877-KIDS-400 (Buffalo Crisis Services Hotline)

## References

[1] Reach Out.com

[2] [stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov)

[3] Hinduja, S. & Patchin, J. W. (2009). *Bullying beyond the schoolyard: Preventing and responding to cyberbullying*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

[4] Robers, S., Zhang, J., & Truman, J. (2010). *Indicators of school crime and safety*. Jessup, MD: National Center for Education Statistics.

[5] Espelage, D. L., Bosworth, K., & Simon, T. R. (2000). Examining the social context of bullying behaviors in early adolescence. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 78, 326-333.

[6] Eslea, M., & Rees, J. (2001). At what age are children most likely to be bullied at school? *Aggressive Behavior*, 27, 419-429.

[7] Nickerson, A. B., & Slater, E. D. (2009). School and community violence and victimization as predictors of suicidal behavior for adolescents. *School Psychology Review*, 38, 218-232.

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