



BULLYING

A FREE RESOURCE PROVIDED BY THE BRIDGE TEEN CENTER

The Bridge Teen Center serves as a “bridge” to families by providing information, encouragement, and support to parents/guardians. These “Info Sheets” are provided in several relevant topics. For more information, contact us at 708.532.0500 or info@thebridgeteencenter.org.

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying can be verbal, social, or physical. It can take place face-to-face or through gossip, public humiliation, or social exclusion. Cyberbullying also occurs through text messaging or apps, social media, or online (especially when teens can send messages anonymously).

- 1 in 3 teens are affected by bullying as a victim and/or bully or bystander.
- 18% of high school students and 36% middle school students report being a victim of bullying.

What is Normal Conflict?	What is Bullying?
Equal power; friends	Imbalance of power; not friends
Happens occasionally	Repeated negative actions
Accidental	Purposeful
Not serious	Serious- threat of physical harm or emotional or psychological hurt
Equal emotional reaction	Strong emotional reaction in only the victim
Not seeking power or attention	Seeking power, control
Not trying to get something	Trying to gain material things or power
Remorse-takes responsibility	No remorse, blames victim
Effort to solve the problem	No effort to solve problem

*Garrity, C. Jens, K., Porter, W., Sager, N., and Short--Camilli, C. (2000) Bully-proofing Your School. Longmont, CO, Sopris West.

MYTHS FACTS

MYTH: Peer conflict is bullying.

FACT: Peer conflict with no perceived power imbalance is not bullying. Arguments, disagreements, and hurt feelings are normal for teens in learning necessary social skills. Conflict resolution and peer mediation may be appropriate in these situations. An isolated incident or occasionally getting “picked on” is not bullying.

MYTH: As a bystander, bullying does not affect me.

FACT: Studies have found that bystanders who witness bullying suffer more psychological stress than the victims themselves. The distress may be due to guilt for failing to stop the bullying or worrying about being the bully’s next target. Bystanders can become defenders and *the key to stopping bullying* rather than silently watching.

MYTH: There is nothing I can do to stop bullying.

FACT: A simple act of kindness can have a big impact. Bullying prevention is a process, not a program. To stop bullying requires a shift in the community to adapt a culture of concern for others, empathy, and kindness. Rather than trying to stop a negative, it is more effective to promote wellness through shared learning experiences and developing cooperative relationships in the family, between peers, and in the community. Volunteering in the community is a practical way to gain these qualities.

MYTH: Bullies are terrible, evil people.

FACT: About 30% of bullies are also victims of bullying. A bully-victim is someone who bullies and is bullied. For example, someone may be bullied by classmates at school and bully a sibling at home. The saying that “hurt people, hurt people” seems true in this

case. Although it may be difficult to show compassion to someone hurting your teen, being kinder than necessary and making ongoing active attempts to resolve issues may be the best way to deal with a bully.

MYTH: Bullying is a “right of passage” and a normal part of growing up.

FACT: Bullying is not just an unpleasant and unimportant part of adolescence. Both teens who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems. Bullying may negatively impact academic performance, physical and mental health, social relationships, and self-perceptions in victims and bullies.

MYTH: Bullying causes suicide. Suicide is a normal response to bullying.

FACT: Most youth who are bullied do not have thoughts of suicide or attempt suicide. Bullying alone is not the cause of suicide. Other factors like depression, mental illness, problems at home, lack of support system, and trauma history contribute to suicide risk, and more than 90% of individuals who die by suicide experienced mental illness. There are ways to get help for mental illness and there is always hope. You may contact The Bridge Teen Center for a list of trusted counselors and support.



<p>Victims of bullying may be likely to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack social skills. • Think negative thoughts. • Have difficulty solving problems. • Be rejected and isolated by peers, feel lonely. • Experience negative family, school, or community environments. • Be aggressive. 	<p>Bullies may be likely to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have friends who bully; are negatively influenced by peers. • Be a leader in social group(s). • have trouble resolving problems. • Have negative attitudes and beliefs about self and/or others. • Perceive school as negative. • Struggle academically. • Experience conflict at home. 	<p>Bystanders may be likely to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think bullying is “none of their business.” • Have trouble resolving problems. • Lack assertiveness. • Passively accept bullying. • Feel powerless to stop bullying. • Lack of knowledge or social skills to help stop bullying. • Be desensitized to bullying due to violent media or home environment.
<p>What can my teen do to stop being bullied?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand tall, smile and remain calm. • Tell or write a note to several adults: teachers, youth leaders, coaches, counselors, or family members. Tell when the behavior is repeated over time. • Keep evidence of the cyberbullying messages, block the bully, and report to online providers, a trusted adult, or law enforcement. • Get involved in volunteering to gain confidence, assertiveness, and friends. • Remove yourself from opportunities for bullying (e.g., take an alternate route to class, travel with a friend, adjust privacy settings on social media, block text messages). Conduct self-care evaluation on personal hygiene or appearance and social gestures or non-verbals that may draw unnecessary negative attention. • Get involved in a supportive community (e.g., club, athletics, youth group) • Speak out against bullying by sharing your story, and be a support to others facing the same issues. • Don’t let bullying define you. Don’t give bullying power over your life. Focus on the positive aspects of your day/life. 	<p>What can my teen do to stop bullying?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a friend to a teen affected by bullying. • Tell or write a note to several adults: teachers, youth leaders, coaches, counselors, or family members. Tell when the behavior is repeated over time. • Help the teen being bullied get away from the situation. Create a distraction or call over an adult but never get violent. • Set a good example. Don’t bully others. • Don’t give bullying an audience. Instead of laughing or encouraging it, speak out against the behavior. Say “I don’t think that’s funny.” or “That’s not ok.” • Don’t spread cyberbullying messages and block the bully. Keep evidence of the cyberbullying and report to online providers, a trusted adult, or law enforcement. • Have an open and honest conversation with a trusted adult and ask for help and guidance if you are bullying others. • Get involved in volunteering to gain confidence, assertiveness, and positive friends. • Get involved in a supportive community (e.g., club, athletics, youth group) 	<p>What can parents do to stop bullying?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage communication without judgement and openness. • Listen to your teen; don’t rescue. • Respond, don’t react. Ask your teen these questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “What will NOT work to improve the situation?” ○ “What can you do to improve the situation?” ○ “What can I do to support you?” • Provide encouragement in many forms. • Come up with a plan of action steps to create hope and change. • Promote wellness in your teen and improve your relationship through shared learning experiences. • Raise a confident and bullying-proof teen through parental warmth and teaching and modeling kindness and empathy. • Identify qualities and create opportunities that will increase confidence in your teen. Get involved in volunteering. • Show involvement in your teen’s school or community to promote a positive moral culture. • Be a good example by speaking to and about people in a kind way.

RESOURCES

Online/National Helpline/Apps	Treatment & Help in Your Community
<p> http://www.stopbullying.gov/ http://www.thebullyproject.com/ http://www.orlandpark.org/bullyingstopshere 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) </p> <p>Illinois Anti-Bullying Laws: http://stopbullying.gov/laws/illinois.html</p> <p> “ReThink” App developed by a teen to help teens rethink their words “Sit With Us” App developed by teen to promote kindness and inclusion “KnowBullying” App by SAMHSA to help parents have conversations with their teens </p> <p><i>Contact The Bridge Teen Center to subscribe to our Parent Newsletter.</i></p>	<p> Amy Coots-Smith, MA, LCPC at Hope Enrichment Center 708.448.7848 Ext. 2; 7300 W. College Dr., #203, Palos Heights, IL 60463 </p> <p> Larry Ehretsman, MEd, LCPC at Zaborac Counseling Group 708.633.4533; 17255 Oak Park Ave., Tinley Park, IL 60477 </p> <p> Lara Postma, Certified Life Coach 708.927.8399, www.LPcoaching.com </p> <p><i>Contact The Bridge Teen Center for recommended faith communities to foster a sense of belonging and hope.</i></p> <p><i>Contact The Bridge Teen Center for more information and treatment options available through our Resource Book.</i></p>

Sources:

- <http://www.freepatentsonline.com/article/North-American-Journal-Psychology/312401776.html>
- <http://www.brighthorizons.com/family-resources/e-family-news/2011-raising-confident-children-developing-skills-to-respond-to-and-prevent-bullying/>
- <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/work-career/volunteering-and-its-surprising-benefits.htm>
- <http://www.stopbullying.gov/>
- <http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2009/12/witness-bullying.aspx>
- <http://www.apa.org/monitor/2015/07-08/upfront-bullying.aspx>
- <http://preventingbullying.promoteprevent.org/4-bullies-victims-and-bystanders>

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR FREE PROGRAMS FOR TEENS:



15555 S. 71ST COURT - ORLAND PARK, IL 60462
 708.532.0500
 THEBRIDGETEENCENTER.ORG

