

Need to Know Series:
Bullying



Youth In Progress

New York State Foster Care
Youth Leadership Advisory Team

“The mission of Youth In Progress is to enhance and advance the lives of today’s and tomorrow’s youth by supporting their sense of self and responsibility. To do this, we pledge to educate everyone involved in the various systems Youth In Progress members represent to the realities of this experience.”



The world is not always a safe and nurturing place. This pamphlet is designed to give you important information and advice if you have been, or even think you might have been, a victim of bullying, or if you have ever behaved in ways that other people would call “bullying.”

What are the effects of bullying?

Bullying can have very serious consequences. When you are a victim of bullying, you don't feel safe and secure, and sometimes you are afraid to do the things you would normally do. Bullying can affect many areas of your life, including:

- ☪ Feeling apprehensive about school, which can lead to a decline in school performance and attendance;
- ☪ Feeling physically ill for no apparent medical reason;
- ☪ Feeling sad, sullen, angry, or scared more often than usual;
- ☪ Feeling isolated and alone, which can lead to suicidal thoughts;
- ☪ Feeling powerless.



What does bullying look like?

Most people think of bullying as being physically attacked, but there are many other types of bullying that are very common. These include:

-  **Verbal Bullying:** Name-calling, making offensive remarks, or joking about a person's religion, gender, ethnicity, or the way they look.
-  **Indirect Bullying:** Includes spreading rumors or stories about someone you know or don't know, telling others something that was shared with you in private, and excluding certain people from groups.
-  **Intimidation:** When a bully threatens someone and frightens that person enough to make him or her do what the bully wants.
-  **Social Alienation:** When a bully excludes someone from a group on purpose.
-  **Cyberbullying:** Using computers, cell phones and other electronic devices to harm others.
-  **Sexual Bullying:** Involves unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive or inappropriate comments.
-  **LGBTQ Bullying:** Harassing an individual based upon the victim's sexual orientation or gender identity OR perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.

You can be exposed to bullying based on your gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression or just by being "different" from what others believe is the "norm."



What do you do if you are the bully?

Most people don't want to hurt other people intentionally. Sometimes bullies don't even realize the consequences of their actions. Sadly, there are some people in this world who actually like to make others feel bad, and these are some of the most difficult people to deal with. Look at the following checklist to see if you might have some bullying tendencies:

- ☪ Have you been bullied by someone in the past and feel like you have to make up for it by doing the same thing to others? Do you feel, "I went through it, so other kids should, also"?
- ☪ Does it make you feel better to hurt other people or take their things?
- ☪ Are you bigger and stronger than other people your age, and do you sometimes use your size and strength to get your way?






If you have bullied other people, think about why you did it. Think about how or what you were feeling at the time. Think about how you felt afterwards.

“Being a bully is senseless; not everyone will make it as friends, but to bully someone who isn't a friend shows immaturity and a lack of self-respect.”

– Former foster youth



How can you stop being a bully?

-  You can say you're sorry to people you've bullied, and replace your bullying with friendly behavior. Others may not trust you right away, but things may get better over time.
-  If you don't feel good about yourself, look for ways to boost your self-esteem. Try new activities, do volunteer work, or get involved with school sports.
-  If you feel like you're having trouble controlling your feelings, especially anger, talk to someone you trust, like your teacher, guidance counselor, mentor, caseworker, or foster parent.

Bullying harms both the victim and the bully. Some bullies grow up into adults who bully their families, friends, and co-workers, and have serious problems with relationships and careers. Being a bully while in care could impact your placement and lead to a higher level of care. Also, depending on the severity, bullying may lead to the involvement of law enforcement and possible arrest. A supportive, caring adult can help you to sort these things out and help you prepare for a healthy, happy, and productive adulthood.

Resources

Bullying.org:
www.bullying.org

Stop Bullying.gov:
www.stopbullying.gov

The Trevor Project:
www.thetrevorproject.org

Cyberbullying Research Center:
www.cyberbullying.us

Anti-Defamation League:
www.adl.org/combatbullying



What's **YOUR** region?



find contact information on
YouthInProgress.org

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