

## What is Bullying?

Bullying is a conscious, willful, deliberate, hostile and repeated behaviour by one or more people, which is intended to harm others. Bullying takes many forms, and can include many different behaviours, such as:

- physical violence and attacks
- verbal taunts, name-calling and put-downs
- threats and intimidation
- extortion or stealing of money and possessions
- exclusion from the peer group

Bullying is the assertion of power through aggression. Its forms change with age: school playground bullying, sexual harassment, gang attacks, date violence, assault, marital violence, child abuse, workplace harassment and elder abuse (Pepler and Craig, 1997)

“Bullying is not about anger. It is not a conflict to be resolved, it’s about contempt—a powerful feeling of dislike toward someone considered to be worthless, inferior or undeserving of respect. Contempt comes with three apparent psychological advantages that allow kids to harm others without feeling empathy, compassion or shame. These are: a sense of entitlement, that they have the right to hurt or control others, an intolerance towards difference, and a freedom to exclude, bar, isolate and segregate others” (Barbara Coloroso “The Bully, the Bullied and the Bystander”)

## Bullying Myths and Facts:

**Myth:** “Bullying is just, stage, a normal part of life. I went through it my kids will too.”

**Fact:** Bullying is not “normal” or socially acceptable behaviour. We give bullies power by our acceptance of this behaviour.

**Myth:** “If I tell someone, it will just make it worse.”

**Fact:** Research shows that bullying will stop when adults in authority and peers get involved.

**Myth:** “Just stand up for yourself and hit them back”

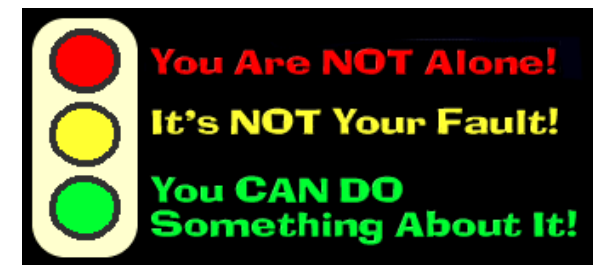
**Fact:** While there are some times when people can be forced to defend themselves, hitting back usually makes the bullying worse and increases the risk for serious physical harm.

**Myth:** “Bullying is a school problem, the teachers should handle it”

**Fact:** Bullying is a broader social problem that often happens outside of schools, on the street, at shopping centers, the local pool, summer camp and in the adult workplace.”

**Myth:** “People are born bullies”

**Fact:** Bullying is a learned behaviour and behaviours can be changed.



**www.bullying.org** is a multiple award-winning, non-profit Web site that was created to help people around the world deal with the issues of bullying and taunting. **www.bullying.org** is a supportive international community where people can learn that they are **NOT** alone in being bullied and taunted, that being bullied and taunted is **NOT** their fault and that they **CAN** do something positive about it.

People can contribute their personal stories, poems, images, oral stories (audio files), music, animations and movies. In order to protect contributors' privacy and security, no last names of young people, or personal contact information is published or shared with anyone else.

**www.bullying.org** also has two moderated, online support groups, one for youth and one for adults

## Bullying Facts:

- 6% of 4,743 children in grades 1 to 8 admitted bullying others "more than once or twice" in the past six weeks -(Pepler et al., 1997)
- 15% of children reported that they had been victimized at the same rate -(Pepler et al., 1997)
- 2% reported being both bullies and victims (bully/victims) -(Pepler et al., 1997)
- Bullying occurs in school playgrounds every 7 minutes and once every 25 minutes in class -(Pepler et al., 1997)
- Boys report more bullying than girls, but the discrepancy between boys' and girls' rates of bullying is not as great in playground observations -(Pepler et al., 1997)
- Boys report more physical forms of bullying: girls tend to bully in indirect ways, such as gossiping and excluding.-(Pepler et al., 1997)
- 11 to 12 year old students reported bullying others more than younger (9-10 year old) and older (13 to 14 year old) students -(Pepler et al., 1997)
- Bullies tend to be hyperactive, disruptive, impulsive and overactive -(Lowenstein, 1978), (Olweus, 1987)
- Bullies are generally aggressive towards their peers, teachers, parents, siblings, and others. -(Olweus, 1991)

## Bullying Facts –cont'd:

- Bullies tend to be assertive and easily provoked They are attracted to situations with aggressive content and have positive attitudes about aggression. -(Stephenson and Smith, 1989)
- Boys who bully are physically stronger and have a



- need to dominate others. -(Olweus, 1987)
- Girls who bully tend to be physically weaker than other girls in their class. -(Roland, 1989)
- Bullies have little empathy for their victims and show little remorse about bullying. -(Olweus, 1987)
- Boys and girls are equally likely to report being victimized -(Pepler et al., 1997)
- Victimization decreases across grade levels: 26% of grades 1-3 children report victimization compared to 15% of grades 4-6 and 12% of grades 7-8 children. -(Pepler et al., 1997)
- Children in lower grades are more likely to be victims of same-age bullies. Younger students experience more direct bullying, whereas older students experience more indirect bullying. -(Olweus, 1993)
- Research has not supported the popular stereotype that victims have unusual physical traits. -(Olweus, 1991)
- Victims often report low self-esteem. likely because of repeated exposure to victimization. -(Besag, 1989)

## Bullying Facts –cont'd:

- Both boys and girls who are victimized, report symptoms of depression, such as sadness, and loss of interest in activities -(Slee, 1995) (Craig, 1997)
- Bully/victims are the most insecure, the least likeable, and the most unsuccessful in school -(Stephenson and Smith, 1989)
- Bully/victims are often strong and easily provoked. -(Besag, 1989)
- Children who are bully-victims appear to be at the greatest risk for adjustment difficulties -(Craig and Pepler, 1995)

-85% of bullying episodes occur in the context of a peer group -(Atlas and Pepler, 1997, Craig and Pepler, 1997)

-83% of students indicate that watching bullying makes them feel uncomfortable. -(Pepler et al., 1997)

-Bullying stops in less than 10 seconds, 57% of the time when peers intervene on behalf of the victim. -(Pepler et al., 1997)

-Boys are more likely than girls to be drawn into bullying episodes and actively participate. -(Craig and Pepler., 1997), (Salmivalli et al., 1996)

-In playground observations, peers intervened in significantly more episodes than adults did (11% of episodes versus 4%). -(Craig and Pepler., 1997)

-Bullies often come from homes that are neglectful and hostile and use harsh punishment. Bullying may be learned by observing high levels of conflict between parents. Care needs to be given so that they do not model bullying for their children. -(Olweus. 1993)

-Victims often keep their problems a secret: They feel they should handle bullying themselves; they worry about the bully's revenge or other children's disapproval: and/or they think that adults can do little to help them. -(Garfalo et al., 1987) , (Olweus, 1991)

-Bullying is reduced in a school if the principal is committed to reducing bullying. Strategies -(Charach et al., 1995)

-Bullying occurs when there is little supervision or when large groups of children engage in rough and tumble play or competitive sports . -(Murphy et al., 1983)

-Bullying is often hidden from teachers. Teachers' lack of awareness is evident in playground observations in which teachers intervened to stop only one in twenty-five (4%) of the bullying episodes (Craig and Pepler, 1997)

