

## BULLYING AWARENESS

# Don't Stand Still for Bullying

Wherever it happens, bullying can make a victim's life miserable. Enabled by an imbalance of power such as size, strength, or status, bullying can take many forms—teasing, rumor spreading, social exclusion, threats and intimidation, and violence. It can occur almost anywhere, including school, work, social settings, and now through electronic communication, or "cyberbullying", such as social media and text messaging, too.

Regardless of its setting, bullying can have severe and long-lasting effects. Victims may feel stress, anxiety, vulnerability, depression, and a range of uncomfortable physical symptoms. The bullying can lead to retaliation violence and, in extreme cases, even suicide.

Fortunately, more people than ever are now aware of bullying behavior—including workplace harassment—and more institutions are adopting anti-bullying policies. However, victims of bullying still often feel isolated and may not know what they can do to stop the abusive behavior.

## Bullying at School: What Parents Can Do



Bullying behavior—whether it is physical abuse or less direct forms of intimidation—is far from a new phenomenon in schools. But today, we know more about how common bullying is and how much it can cause long-term harm to victims. It's more important than ever to have anti-bullying programs in schools. Parents can serve as a frontline of support.

### Look for the Warning Signs

Signs that your child may be a victim of bullying can include withdrawal from interaction with friends and family, hesitation to attend school, loss of interest in typical activities, decreased appetite, torn clothing, bruises, sleep problems, and depression.

### Keep the Dialogue Open

Ask your child each day about classroom activities, peer relations, and any problems he or she may have. Bullied children may be too embarrassed to report abuse, so it's vital to listen closely and step in if you suspect bullying.

### Have a Safety Strategy

Work on equipping your child with tactics to stay safe. Teach your child nonviolent ways to deal with bullies, such as walking away or talking out issues. Teach them to stay near adults and other students, to find alternate routes away from bullies in school, to eat lunch in a group, and to sit near the front of the school bus. Instruct them to immediately go to a teacher or administrator if bullied.

### Work with the School

Many schools now have anti-bullying awareness events and policies. If your child's school doesn't have such a program, encourage the school administration to develop one. Get help from your parents' association if needed.

### Build Resilience and Confidence

If your child is struggling with the effects of bullying, a mental health professional such as a psychologist or social worker can help him or her build resilience and confidence. Contact your program anytime for confidential assistance.

Sources: National Crime Prevention Council, American Psychological Association, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/StopBullying.gov.

## A NEW ERA OF BULLYING

### How to Unplug a Cyberbully

To help young people combat cyberbullying (bullies using technology):

**Don't be drawn in.** If someone sends a mean or threatening message, or posts something offensive, do not respond.

**Document the bullying.** A child should not erase bullying messages, posts or pictures. They should be saved as evidence and shared with a trusted adult or authority.

**Monitor your child's network.** Learn about your child's world by joining their social media network(s). There's no need to intrude by posting, but it doesn't hurt to know the "neighborhood."

**Encourage your child to report online threats.** They should tell you immediately if they see something online that makes them feel threatened.

**File a complaint.** Sending inappropriate language may violate the terms and conditions of communications providers and social networking sites. Notify them with copies of the offensive posts.

**Get official advice.** If you are uncertain whether cyberbullying violates your area's criminal laws, contact local police.

### When Bullying Happens at Work

If you believe you have been the target of abusive, harassing behavior in the workplace, either in person or by email, take the following course of action:

- Firmly tell the person that his or her behavior is inappropriate and may be seen as harassment.
- Document every instance of bullying behavior and ask your coworkers to do the same. Keep a written journal with the date, time, and event description. Include the names of any witnesses.
- Keep copies of any inappropriate memos, emails, or texts you have received.
- Report the abuse to a manager or to Human Resources in your organization. Don't delay in speaking up. File a formal complaint if necessary to get action.
- Do not retaliate against a bully. Observers could easily misinterpret it and think you're the one at fault.
- If you have gone through your organization's formal channels but the bullying continues, don't hesitate to go to the next level of management.
- If the organization's response is inadequate and places you at risk, consider making a job change. No one should have to put up with bullying.

Employee Assistance Program  
24 HOURS A DAY

**1-800-222-0364**

(TTY: 1-888-262-7848)

**FOH4You.com**



Services are offered as a **FREE** benefit to you and your family members, and are confidential within the limits of the law.

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# Don't Stand Still for Bullying

**Wherever it happens, bullying can make a victim's life miserable.** Bullying can take many forms and occur almost anywhere, including at school, at work and online. Its effects on victims can be severe and long-lasting, so it is important to learn how to respond to threatening behavior.

Access the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for resources that can help children, parents and employees bounce back from bullying. The EAP offers:

- **In-person, short-term counseling** from licensed counselors
- **Online information and interactive tools** on topics such as: balance, stress and coping, living a healthy lifestyle, self-improvement, coping with change, time management and more

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