



## BULLYING

### Guidelines for teenagers

#### What is bullying?

Bullying is when a teen (or a group of teens) hurts, harasses or harms deliberately and repeatedly some other teen who is physically smaller, weaker or more vulnerable.

Bullying occurs in many ways:

- Malicious teasing, taunting
- Threats, name-calling
- Direct physical attack and violence (such as hitting, pushing, kicking)
- Sexual harassment (sexual remarks or gestures)
- Forcing someone to hand over their money, mobile or belongings
- Sending abusive or threatening text messages or videos on mobiles or via e-mail
- Spreading false rumours
- Causing social isolation because of one's origin, gender, sexual preference, disability, appearance or religion.

#### What you can do if you are being bullied

- ***You shouldn't feel ashamed*** or blame yourself. It's not your fault – but it is important that you get help.
- ***Ask for help!*** Is there someone who you would trust and feel comfortable talking to about what's going on? Maybe a friend, someone at your school, a family member? Many teens do not talk to adults because they feel fearful or embarrassed and they believe they should handle the problem on their own. Others believe that involving adults will only make the situation worse. Nevertheless, a trusted adult can help you develop a plan of action. Your being bullied will carry on for as long as you keep it secret. Once you've decided who to talk to, tell them what's happening and how it's making you feel. They might be able to help you.
- ***If you talk to someone about what's happening and it doesn't help, don't give up.*** Sometimes you may need to talk to more than one person. You have the right to ask for help. Always remember that it is not your fault!
- ***When another teen bullies you, don't let them see how frightened or angry you feel.*** If bullies know they are getting to you, they are likely to torment you more. If at all possible, stay calm and respond evenly and firmly or just say nothing and walk away.
- ***When you walk try to project strength and self-confidence.*** Hold your head up, stand up straight, make eye contact and walk confidently. Try to be with friends rather than on your own. A bully is more likely to leave you alone if you are with your friends.
- ***Avoid situations / places where bullying can happen.*** It's important to feel secure. Try to walk home taking a different route or find a friend or a relative to walk to and from school with. If bullying occurs at school, avoid areas that are isolated or unsupervised by adults, and stick with friends as much as possible.
- At school, ask a teacher you trust to tell you about the ***school's policy on bullying*** (rules and penalties on students bullying other students).
- Trying to remember things accurately can sometimes be difficult, so ***keep a record*** of what happens to you. Writing it down is often a good way of being sure about when and where things happened.

#### What you can do if you witness bullying at school or your neighbourhood

- ***Do not get involved.*** It can be hard not to interfere if you see someone being bullied but try not to participate.
- ***Attempt to defuse bullying situations when you see them starting up.*** For example, try to use humour to defuse a

# Be Allies Not Bullies



situation, or draw attention away from the targeted person. Do not place yourself at risk, however.

- *Don't ignore what happens.* Let the bully know that you've seen what's been going on and suggest they talk to someone about their actions. Also support the person who's being bullied and encourage them to speak to an adult.
- *If it is in school speak to a teacher you trust!* If you are worried about putting yourself at risk, write them an anonymous note about the incident you witnessed. Teachers are often the last to know that bullying is going on. In order to be able to do anything about it, they need to know it's happening.
- *You can organise an Anti-Bullying Day in your school* with group discussions on how to end bullying. Also you can make poster campaigns and relevant graffiti or put on a school play or drama sketches to raise awareness.

## **On the Internet**

Don't give your personal details on any *site* or *chat room*. Don't reveal your password to anyone, not even to close friends or relatives. If you receive an indecent or threatening *e-mail* don't answer. Print it and give it to an adult. Don't open *e-mails* or *mobile texts* sent by people you **What you can do if you are bullying someone**

- *Think right.* No one wants to be friend with someone who picks on others. They may treat you well because they are afraid of you, not because they love you.
- *Ask for help!* Sometimes bad things happen. For instance, having problems at home can make you more likely to bully others. It's important to talk to someone you trust and get help, rather than taking your frustration out on others.
- *Just because you've bullied others in the past doesn't mean you have to keep doing it!* Bullying can lead teenagers to feel upset, scared and angry. It can affect their concentration at school and their relationships since they end up socially isolated. In extreme cases, bullying can be devastating for teens because some are disappointed, they feel unhappy, alone and unwanted and they may even consider suicide. You can put a stop to that by changing your behaviour.
- *You can get into a lot of trouble if you keep bullying others.* You might get suspended or expelled from school or, in extreme cases, the police might get involved. Bullying is an illegal action.

## **REMEMBER: We are all DIFFERENT!**

Some of us are tall, others short. Some have black hair, others blonde, brown, red or no hair at all. Others have freckles or wear glasses or have big ears and a flat nose. Some need a cane to walk with or are on wheelchairs. Others are good at arts, sports, music or maths. Some are from other countries or dress in different styles. It would be boring if we were all the same! We are all different but all equal and no one deserves to be bullied!

