

Coping With Bullying

How to Stop Bullying



Victim of a Bully - nookiez

Bullying is a serious problem among American youth. Bullying statistics document a problem that must be effectively addressed by the schools. There's hope...

School systems, including principals, teachers, parents and students, must recognize bullying for the serious problem that it is. Any child targeted by a bully undoubtedly feels fear, completely alone, helpless, and maybe even embarrassed. Feeling fearful of such aggression is natural. Being the victim of a bully is nothing to feel shame about, however. Shame belongs on the bully, not on the victim. Targets of bullies should know they're not alone.

As Ralph Waldo Emerson, American essayist, philosopher and poet, said, "When a resolute young fellow steps up to the great bully, the world, and takes him boldly by the beard, he is often surprised to find it comes off in his hand, and that it was only tied on to scare away the timid adventurers."

Characteristics of Bullies

It's true that some bullies make a show of false bravado. They tease and harass, but some bullies are all bark and no bite, as the old saying goes. If one were to “pull off their beard” and call their bluff, one may discover beneath a real cream puff.

Most bullies, however, have some kind of advantage: size, strength or power over their victims. Most mean to inflict verbal, emotional or physical harm on their targets. It is this type of bullying that is a threatening and ever-increasing problem for children and teenagers.

Such bullying can take the form of direct attacks, such as hitting, taunting, name-calling, malicious sexual remarks, and stealing or damaging belongings. It can also take the form of more subtle attacks, such as spreading rumors or enlisting cohorts to reject and exclude the victim. How can victims deal with this deliberately aggressive and potentially harmful bully?

Ways to Stop a Bully

- Ignoring the bully and simply walking away from his harassment may work with some bullies.
- Another simple strategy would be to tell the bully as firmly as possible to stop. Many bullies stop bullying within 10 seconds when someone tells the bully to stop.
- Using humor might get the bully to stop as well. The victim making a joke or laughing at himself can be an effective defense. Bullies often give up when they don't get the expected response from their intended victim.
- Victims of bullies should always stick with a friend at recess, lunch, in the hallways, on the bus or walking home. The risk of being targeted is much greater if the victim is alone.
- Targets of bullies should make friends and socialize with those friends outside of school so that they can maintain a strong social support system.

In addition to these suggested strategies, children are encouraged to involve parents and the school to take active measures to monitor against bullying and stop bullying behavior.

Getting Help When Dealing With a Bully

Bullying victims should talk to parents or another trusted adult, such as a teacher, counselor, or principal. Telling an adult about bullying doesn't constitute tattling and, contrary to popular victim belief, informing an adult doesn't make the situation worse. Victims shouldn't be ashamed of being unable to handle the bully alone. Trusted adults can help develop a plan to end the bullying and provide much needed support.

Victims shouldn't retaliate against a bully or let him see how upsetting the harassment is. When a bully suspects he's made his target afraid or upset, he's likely to torment even more. Victims should remain calm and respond firmly or say nothing at all. Then, as suggested before, walk away, if possible.

The strategies suggested by the National Youth Violence Resource Center and the experts from Education.com, if practiced consistently, should help stop bullying and victim fear. The article, Strategies for Dealing with a Bully Dilemma, provides additional helpful information to help stop bullying. An excellent resource for information about dealing with the bullying problem is a website, HALT (Humanity Against Local Terrorism).