

BULLYING: AN OVERVIEW

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying involves 3 distinct criteria

Intent to harm
An imbalance of power
Repetition

WHAT FORMS CAN BULLYING TAKE?

There are 4 types of Bullying

PHYSICAL



Examples include; hitting, spitting, tripping, stealing or wrecking property.

VERBAL



Examples include; name-calling, rumor spreading, threatening

EMOTIONAL



Examples include; social isolation, obscene gestures, manipulation

CYBER



Examples include; Using the internet, instant messages, email or some other form of technology to spread rumors, threaten or in any other way hurt others

IS YOUR CHILD BEING BULLIED?

Some **warning signs** of a child who may be being bullied include

- Comes home with torn, damages, or missing clothing, books and belongings
- Has unexplained bruises, injuries, cuts and scratches
- Does not bring classmates or other peers home after school and seldom spends time in the homes of classmates or peers
- Seems isolated from peers and may not have a good friend to share time with
- Appears to be fearful about attending school , walking to and from school, or riding the bus
- Has poor appetite, headaches, and stomach pains (particularly in the morning)
- Chooses a longer, “illogical” route for going to and from school
- Asks for or takes extra money from family (money that may go to a bully)
- Appears anxious, distressed, unhappy, depressed or tearful when he or she comes home from school
- Shows unexpected mood shifts, irritability, or sudden outbursts of temper
- Has sleeping or eating problems
- May lose interest in school work and experience a decline in academic performance
- Talks about or attempts suicide

Some things **you can do to help** a child who is being bullied include

- Encourage your child to share his/her problems with you. Ensure him or her that this is not tattling. Know that your child may be embarrassed, ashamed, and fearful. Listen attentively and reassure him/her that he/she will not have to face the problem alone.
- Praise and encourage your child. Help him or her take pride in his/her accomplishments and differences. A confident child is less likely to be targeted by bullies.
- Search for talents and positive attributes that can be developed in your child. This may help a child to assert him or her self.
- Help your child develop friendships. Stimulate your child to meet and interact with new peers. A new environment with new peers can provide a new chance for a child who has been victimized
- Encourage your child to make contact with calm and friendly children in his or her class (or in other classes). This may require the assistance of the school.
- Motivate your child to participate in physical activity or sports. Physical exercise can result in better physical coordination and less "body anxiety." This, in turn, can increase your child's self-esteem and improve peer relations.
- Maintain contact with your child's school. Keep a detailed record of bullying episodes and related communication with the school. Help develop a plan of action for the school to follow. Monitor the situation by maintaining communication with the school and your child.
- Seek help from a mental health professional.

IS YOUR CHILD A BULLY?

If you suspect that your child may be bullying others, you can help to **curb the behavior** by

- Make clear to your child that you take the bullying seriously, and will not tolerate such behavior in the future.
- Develop a consistent family rules system. Use praise and reinforcement for rule-following behavior. Use consistent, non-hostile, negative consequences for rule violation. Set a good example for your child by following these rules yourself. If your

- child observes aggressive behavior by you, he or she is more likely to act aggressively toward peers.
- Spend more time with your child. Monitor and supervise your child's activities. Know your child's friends, where they spend their free time, and what they do with that free time.
 - Build on your child's talents and help him or her develop less aggressive and more appropriate reaction behaviors.
 - Maintain contact with your child's school. Support the school's efforts to modify your child's behavior. Enlist help from the school to try and modify your child's behavior.
 - Seek help from a mental health professional.

FALSE BELIEVES ABOUT BULLYING

- Being bullied builds character.
- Bullying is part of growing up.
- Kids will be kids." or "Boys will be boys.
- Sticks and stones may break your bones, but names can never hurt you.
- What did you do to him to make him treat you that way.
- You just have to toughen up." or "You just have to learn how to stand up for yourself.
- Hit him back. He won't bother you again.
- I was bullied in school and I turned out fine." or "I was a bully in school and I turned out fine.
- No kids are bullied in this school.
- Only children who are different get bullied.
- Only children in large schools/classes get bullied.

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Alberta Government websites dedicated to the prevention and elimination of bullying

For Children:

www.teamheroes.ca

For Youth:

www.b-free.ca

For Adults:

www.bullyfreealberta.ca