



MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS TO EVERYONE

BULLYING

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Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group that **intentionally hurts someone** they perceive as vulnerable on a physical or emotional basis, usually over an extended period of time. It can range from teasing and rumours to physical injury. Recognition of bullying has been extended to include bullying through the misuse of technology, also known as cyberbullying.

Bullying is more than being angry with or disliking someone. It is the continued abuse, teasing and harassment by a person or a group of people who think they have power over someone else. It can happen to anyone of any age. It can happen at school, work, home, or online (through social media, text messaging or email).

TYPES OF BULLYING



VERBAL

Name-calling, teasing, gossiping, threatening to cause harm to a person or someone they love.



PHYSICAL

Hitting, punching, kicking, pulling hair, tripping or pushing someone, spitting, breaking a person's possessions, pulling faces or making rude hand signals.



SOCIAL

Spreading rumours, misrepresenting a person, playing jokes, ostracising a person, embarrassing someone in public, harassing a person because of their ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality or disability, stalking.



CYBER

Exclusion, harassment, outing or doxxing (*revealing sensitive information*), trickery (*earning a person's trust and then revealing sensitive information*), cyberstalking (*can involve physical threats*), fraping (*using someone's social media accounts to post inappropriate content in their name*), masquerading (*creating a profile to cyberbully someone*), dissing (*spreading hurtful information about someone to ruin their reputation*), trolling (*posting inflammatory comments*), flaming (*directing insults and profanity at a person*).

WHY DO PEOPLE BULLY?

- Jealousy and anger.
- To be part of the “in-crowd”, to fit in with a particular group of people.
- Control – often the bully feels a lack of control in their own life.
- They have been bullied themselves.

IMPACT

The impact of bullying is harmful to those experiencing it and can lead to long-term damaging emotional effects and high levels of stress. It can affect children and adults alike. The consequences of being bullied can include:

- **Sleeping** too little or too much.
- **Eating** too little or too much.
- **Trouble concentrating** at school or work.
- **Difficulty coping** with everyday activities.
- **Physical symptoms**, such as palpitations, shortness of breath, nausea or vomiting, and trembling or shaking.
- **Loneliness** and **isolation**.
- A strong **sense of rejection**.
- Feeling **hopeless** and **powerless**.
- Feeling **less safe** and **more afraid**.
- **Anxiety** and **depression**.
- **Irritability**.
- **Lowered self-esteem**.
- **Self-harm** and **suicidal thoughts**.

*What can you do if **you** are the* **VICTIM OF BULLYING?**

- Keep your **distance** from the bully.
- Try **not to react** to the bully – most times that is what a bully is hoping for.
- Tell the person you **don't like** what they are doing and to **stop**.
- Use **humour** to diffuse an immediate threat of bullying.
- **Talk** to a trusted friend, parent, teacher or person in authority.
- **Build resilience** so that the things bullies say and do have little impact on your self-esteem.
- **Report** incidences of bullying.

*What can you do to **support** someone* **WHO HAS BEEN BULLIED?**

- **Never be involved in bullying behaviour** just to be part of the in-crowd. Make sure your friends know that you won't stand for this kind of behaviour.
- **Never stand by and watch** or encourage intimidating or bullying behaviour.
- Ask the person who is being bullied **how you can support them**. Be respectful. Listen to and hear what they have to say.
- When they are ready to seek support, go with them. **Suggest they speak** to a trusted friend, teacher or parent.
- **Report** the behaviour to a person in authority.
- At all times it is important to remember to be mindful of your own **safety** as well as that of the person(s) being bullied.

Reducing bullying IN THE COMMUNITY

Understand that there is **no one-size-fits-all approach** to stop bullying. It is important to develop a number of strategies and approaches.



Encourage a culture of **respect and kindness**. Build positive relationships that encourage inclusion.

Understand that **human beings are diverse** and that people who are different are not lesser and do not deserve to be treated badly.

Be **transparent** and **open**. Encourage people to speak up. Have conversations that make it easy to talk about what is going on for a person, how they are feeling and how they might respond to situations.



Teach children from a very early age, both at home and at school, to talk about how they are feeling, what appropriate behaviour is and good ways to resolve differences.



REFERENCES

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