



**Definitions & Types of Bullying**  
**Normal Conflict Vs Bullying**  
**Difference between Tattling & Telling**  
**What Parents Can Do?**  
**Bully-Proofing Your Child**  
**What if your child is the bully?**  
**Question and Answer session**

**Lionel Hartley, PhD**

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# *Peaceably Preventing Schoolyard Bullying*

## **What is Bullying?**

**Bullying is when purposeful acts of meanness are repeated over time in an situation where there is an imbalance of power.**

- .. Purposeful acts of meanness**
- .. Repeated**
- .. Imbalance of power**

## **Types of Bullying**

- Physical bullying**
- Verbal bullying**
- Social**
- Psychological bullying**
- Cyber bullying**

# **What is the School's**

## **Approach to Bullying**

### **Typical Parent Handbook:**

- At [\_\_\_\_\_] we acknowledge that children are growing up in an era in which they are exposed to a new range of social pressures, choices and technology which did not exist in other times.**
- At [\_\_\_\_\_] we shall provide a seven-year program, from Prep to Year six which is designed to equip our young people to confront social, moral and digital issues in the light of moral teachings.**
- The role of the school is to provide an atmosphere which encourages respect for others and fosters healthy attitudes towards self-esteem.**
- Our policy and practice, therefore, is based on explicit teaching of expected behaviours, encouragement, affirmation and acceptance of the individual – to enable our students to develop the capacity to take informed responsibility in their own lives.**

## **What Can We Do About It?**

**Parents need to take strong and immediate action to prevent bullying behaviour getting out of hand. If you find your child has been involved in some type of bullying, here are four important things you can do:**

- 1. Manage your reactions**
- 2. Get the facts**
- 3. Talk with your child**
- 4. Work to resolve the situation**

## **What can the Victim do?**

**These can be tried if the child feels safe:**

- 1. ignore them**
- 2. tell them to stop and then walk away**
- 3. pretend you don't care, try to act unaffected or unimpressed**
- 4. try to deflect the bullying (e.g. pretending to agree in an offhand way 'okay, yeah, maybe')**
- 5. go somewhere else**
- 6. get support from your friends**
- 7. talk to an adult at the school or at home**

**who can help stop the bullying**

**8. keep asking for support until the bullying stops.**

## **What should the Victim NOT do?**

- **fight back**
- **bully the person who has bullied them**
- **remaining silent about the problem**

## **Who Is Involved?**

**The Person Who is Bullying**

**The Victim**

**The Bystander**

**We will look at each of these in turn...**

## **The Person Who is Bullying**

- **Displays little empathy for victims**
- **Enjoys the role**
- **Lacks a sense of remorse**
- **Seeks control and domination**
- **Seeks attention from peers**
- **Is a good communicator who is quick**

**witted, offers fast verbal responses, and is able to talk his way out of trouble**

- **Has a significant role model who models aggressive or violent behavior**
- **Often strong, tough, powerful, well coordinated, dominant, confident**

**Ring Leader  
Associates  
Reinforcers**

### **The Victim (passive)**

- **Does not invite attack; is sensitive**
- **Is emotional, cry easily**
- **Generally lacks social skills**
- **Feels isolated at school/ lonely/ depressed**
- **May have learning problems**
- **Is unable to defend himself/herself**
- **Is likely to be anxious and insecure**

### **Victim (provocative)**

- **Has few friends**
- **Repeatedly pesters and irritates others**
- **Is quick tempered and easily provoked**

- **Will fight back**
- **May provoke attacks**
- **May experience learning and attention problems**
- **May look as if he/she is a bully because they tend to maintain conflict**

## **Bystander or Defender**

- **Is afraid of associating with the victim for fear the person bullying will turn on them**
- **Wants to help but doesn't know what to do**
- **Feels guilty for not acting**
- **Fears reporting will make him a tattler**
- **Doesn't like what s/he sees, but feels powerless**
- **Feels unsafe and unable to take action**
- **Feels a loss of control**

## **Did You Know?**

- **By 6 weeks into the school year the bully victim patterns have been established.**
- **Physical bullying increases through the primary years and peaks in upper Primary or High School.**

- **Children do not tell on bullies because they are afraid it will get worse. They feel no one can help them if they do.**
- **Bullying can take no longer than 10 seconds.**
- **Bullying can be disguised as playing.**
- **The single most effective deterrent to bullying is adult authority.**

## **Why Make Changes?**

- **An estimated 160,000 students miss school each day because of fear of bullying.**
- **40% of students are bullies or victims.**
- **Long term victims may develop mental and health issues.**
- **Bullying is an entry level to violence.**
- **60% of bullies have criminal convictions by age 24.**
- **School shootings have been linked with bullying problems.**

**These are US figures, but Aust. is no different.**



## **How do I know if my child is being bullied?**

- **not wanting to go to school**
- **finding excuses for not going to school**
- **wanting to go to school a different way**
- **being very tense, tearful and unhappy ·**
- **talking about hating school or other children**
- **having bruises or scratches**
- **damage to or loss of personal belongings**
- **showing problems with sleeping**
- **not having any friends**
- **refusing to talk about what happens at school**
- **being upset or secretive**

## **What Makes a Bully?**

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## **How to Talk to Kids About Bullying**

- **Your child's attitude**
- **Your child's skills**
- **Role Play**

- **Your child's supports and networks**
  - Practice
  - Courage
  - Be flexible
  - Celebrate

## **Am I Acting Like a Bully?**

**Questions you can ask yourself:**

- **Am I gossiping?**
- **Am I destroying property?**
- **Am I respecting other people's privacy?**
- **Am I using words or actions to hurt someone else?**
- **Am I secretive about my behaviour?**

## **What Parents Can Do?**

- **In this section we will look at:**
  - **What to look for**
  - **Steps to bully-proof your child**
  - **If your child is a victim**
  - **If your child is a bully**

## **What To Look For**

- **Excuses for not wanting to come to school**
- **Unexplained bruises, torn clothes**
- **Loss of appetite / hungry after school**
- **Need for extra school supplies or money**
- **Sleep problems**
- **Secretive/sullen/ temper outburst**
- **Rushes to bathroom when arriving home**
- **Frequent trips to the nurse**

## **Steps to Bully-Proof Your Child**

- **Let the school know your concerns**
- **Keep a record of events**
- **Teach your child self respect, assertiveness**
- **Let your child know it is okay to express anger appropriately**
- **Encourage Friendships**
- **Teach social skills (sharing, compromises, apologies, I messages, etc.)**
- **Encourage telling vs. tattling (explained on next slide)**
- **Don't advise ignoring or attacking the bully**

# Tattling Vs Telling



**Tattling vs. Telling**

<b>Tattling</b>	vs.	<b>Telling</b>
purpose is to get someone in trouble	vs.	purpose is to keep people safe
can handle by self	vs.	need help from an adult to solve
unimportant	vs.	important
harmless topic	vs.	harmful or dangerous physically or psychologically
behavior is accidental	vs.	behavior is purposeful

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## What Parents Can Do

**Activities: Talking About Bullying**

## If Your Child is a Victim

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## **What if your child is the bully?**

- **Evaluate if this behavior is being modelled at home- seek counseling**
- **Do not use physical punishment , or humiliation. Instead remove privileges**
- **Provide parental supervision**
- **Put an immediate stop to any bullying you observe**
- **Emphasize praise and positive rewards**

**What if your child is the bully?**

## **What can parents do?**

- **When You ... I feel ... because....**

## **What can teachers do? (preventive)**

- **Provide students opportunity to talk about bullying and provide safe ways to report.**
- **Include classroom rules against bullying.**
- **Enlist their support in defining bullying as unacceptable for our school.**
- **Develop a classroom action plan to ensure that students know what to do when they observe a situation.**

- Provide classroom activities and discussion about bullying.**
- Focus on developing empathy and respect for others**
- Work on friendship, assertive and mediation skills.**

### **What can teachers do? (action)**

- Take immediate action when bullying is observed.**
- Confront bullies in private.**
- Use a discipline referral and note bullying behavior in the report.**
- Notify parents of victims and bullies when a problem occurs.**
- Refer both the victim and bullies for counseling.**
- Provide protection for bullying victims. This may include a buddy system, extra supervision at noted area of concerns.**
- Listen to parents who report bullying.**
- Avoid using mediation due to imbalance of power.**

# Your 'Take-Home' Toolkit

In this section we will look at:

- Normal Conflict vs. bullying
- Cyber-Bullying
- If time: "Bullying Thermometer" Activity
- Question & Answer Session
- Info on future seminars and workshops

## Normal Conflict VS. Bullying

**Normal Conflict Vs Bullying**

Normal Conflict	VS.	Bullying
equal power – are friends		imbalance of power – are not friends
happens occasionally		repeated negative actions
accidental		purposeful
not serious		serious – threat of physical emotional or psychological harm or hurt
equal emotional reaction		emotional reactance on part of the victim
not seeking power or attention		seeking power, control
not trying to get something		to gain material things or power
remorse - take responsibility		no remorse - blames victim
effort to solve the problem		no effort to solve problem

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# **Cyber Bullying**

**The main forms of cyber bullying are:**

- **Flaming**
- **Harassment**
- **Denigration**
- **Outing**
- **Exclusion**
- **Cyber stalking**

## **Bullying Thermometer**

- **See handouts**

## **Conclusion**

- **Housekeeping**
- **Survey forms**
- **Next event**
- **Question and Answer session**



# Peaceably Preventing Schoolyard Bullying



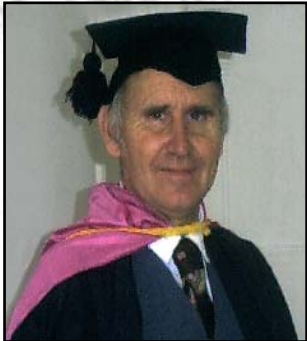
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**Seminar &  
Workshop**

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# Who is your Seminar Author?



Lionel Hartley, author, radio broadcaster, public speaker and retired sociologist. He was a Lifestyle Educator and Family-life Counsellor for three decades. He is a grandparent, married to Rosemary (for 40+ years) with three grown children.



*Lionel D C Hartley, DipAdmin(NZIM), HonDip (DramArt), DipTheol (SDB), RGN (Psy, PsyPaed, Admin, Nutn), Dip Bus Law, Dip Econ, Dip Accy, BA (Lit), MA, PhD [etc.]*

[www.hartleyonline.blogspot.com](http://www.hartleyonline.blogspot.com)



Becca Blackburn

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# What is Bullying?


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- ✓ **Purposeful acts of meanness**
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# Types of Bullying

- **Physical bullying**
  - **Verbal bullying**
  - **Social**
  - **Psychological bullying**
  - **Cyber bullying**
- 

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# What is the School's Approach to Bullying

## Typical Parent Handbook:

- At [\_\_\_\_\_] we acknowledge that children are growing up in an era in which they are exposed to a new range of social pressures, choices and technology which did not exist in other times.
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# What is the School's Approach to Bullying

## Typical Parent Handbook (Continued)

- The role of the school is to provide an atmosphere which encourages respect for others and fosters healthy attitudes towards self-esteem.
- Our policy and practice, therefore, is based on explicit teaching of expected behaviours, encouragement, affirmation and acceptance of the individual – to enable our students to develop the capacity to take informed responsibility in their own lives.

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# What is the School's Approach to Bullying

**Your local school's Parent Handbook**

**(See handout)**

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## What Can We Do About It?

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## What can the Victim do?

These can be tried if the child feels safe:

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## What can the Victim do?

These can be tried if the child feels safe:

5. go somewhere else
6. get support from your friends
7. talk to an adult at the school or at home who can help stop the bullying
8. keep asking for support until the bullying stops.

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# Who Is Involved?

**The Person Who is Bullying  
The Victim  
The Bystander**

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# The Person Who is Bullying

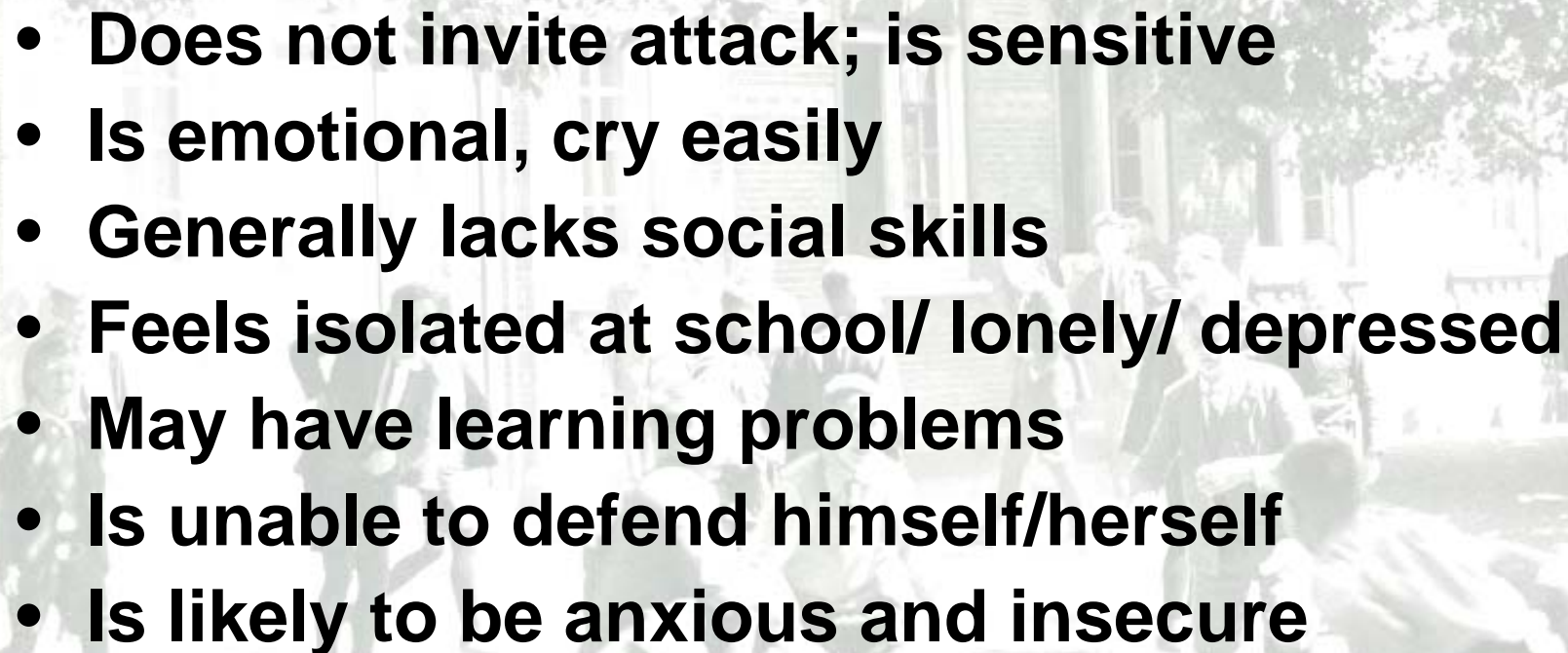
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## The Victim (passive)

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## Did You Know?

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- **Children do not tell on bullies because they are afraid it will get worse. They feel no one can help them if they do.**

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## Did You Know?

- **Bullying can take no longer than 10 seconds.**
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- **The single most effective deterrent to bullying is adult authority.**



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## Why Make Changes?

- **An estimated 160,000 students miss school each day because of fear of bullying.**
- **40% of students are bullies or victims.**
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## How do I know if my child is being bullied?

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(Cont...)

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## How do I know if my child is being bullied?

- **damage to or loss of personal belongings**
- **showing problems with sleeping**
- **not having any friends**
- **refusing to talk about what happens at school**
- **being upset or secretive**

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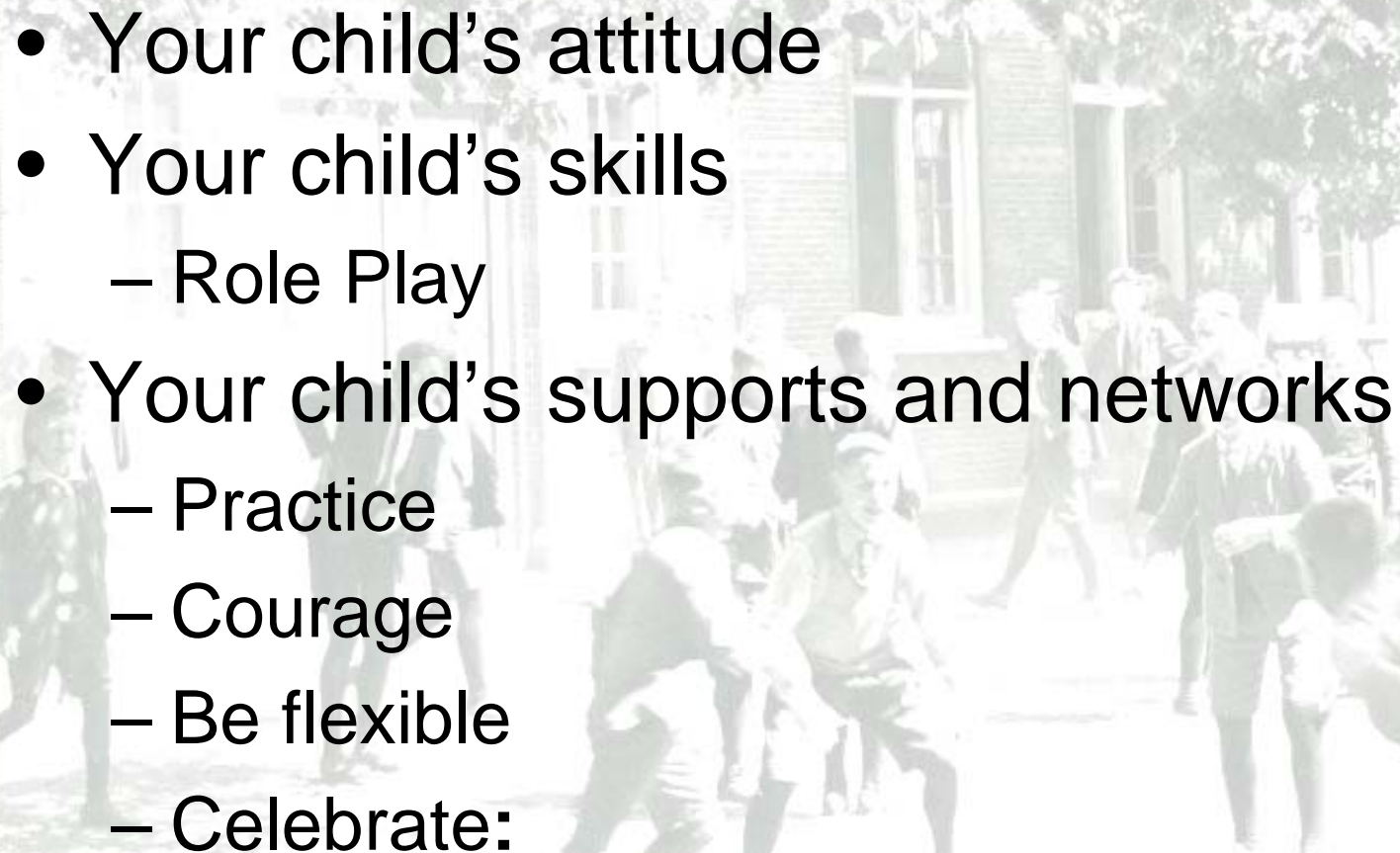
# What Makes a Bully?

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## How to Talk to Kids About Bullying

- Your child's attitude
  - Your child's skills
    - Role Play
  - Your child's supports and networks
    - Practice
    - Courage
    - Be flexible
    - Celebrate:
- 

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# Am I Acting Like a Bully?

**Questions you can ask yourself:**

- **Am I gossiping?**
- **Am I destroying property?**
- **Am I respecting other people's privacy?**
- **Am I using words or actions to hurt someone else?**
- **Am I secretive about my behaviour?**

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## What Parents Can Do?

- In this section we will look at:
- What to look for
- Steps to bully-proof your child
- If your child is a victim
- If your child is a bully



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## What To Look For

- **Excuses for not wanting to come to school**
- **Unexplained bruises, torn clothes**
- **Loss of appetite / hungry after school**
- **Need for extra school supplies or money**
- **Sleep problems**
- **Secretive/sullen/ temper outburst**
- **Rushes to bathroom when arriving home**
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## Steps to Bully-Proof Your Child

- **Let the school know your concerns**
- **Keep a record of events**
- **Teach your child self respect, assertiveness**
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- **Encourage Friendships**
- **Teach social skills (sharing, compromises, apologies, I messages, etc.)**
- **Encourage telling vs. tattling (explained on next slide)**
- **Don't advise ignoring or attacking the bully**

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# Tattling vs. Telling

## Tattling

purpose is to get  
someone in trouble  
can handle by self

unimportant

harmless topic

behavior is accidental

vs.

vs.

vs.

vs.

## Telling

purpose is to keep people safe  
need help from an adult to  
solve

important

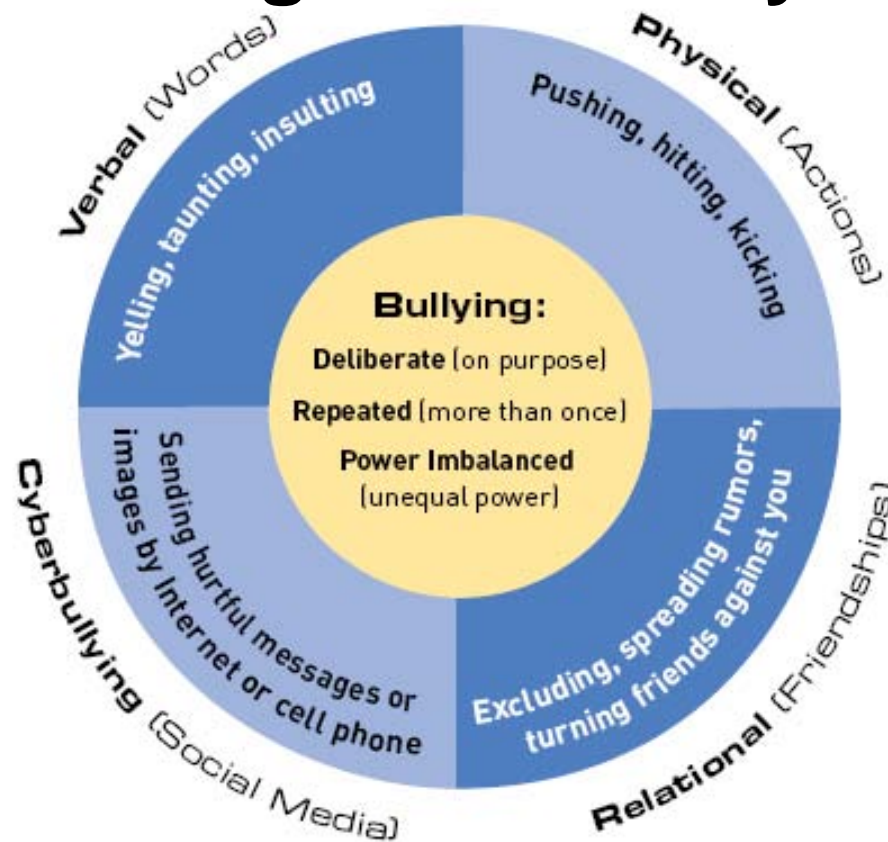
vs. harmful or dangerous  
physically or psychologically

behavior is purposeful



# What Parents Can Do

## Activities: Talking About Bullying



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# If Your Child is a Victim

L

A

T

E

## The “Late” Model

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Professor Donna Cross

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# If Your Child is a Victim

**L**

isten

**Revision**

**A**

cknowledge

**T**

alk about options

**E**

nd with encouragement

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## What if your child is the bully?

- **Evaluate if this behavior is being modelled at home- seek counseling**
- **Do not use physical punishment , or humiliation. Instead remove privileges**
- **Provide parental supervision**
- **Put an immediate stop to any bullying you observe**
- **Emphasize praise and positive rewards**

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# What if your child is the bully?

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## What can parents do?

### Tina Feigal

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## What if your child is the bully?

- **When You ... I feel ... because....**



joy



accepted



aware



angry



sadness



rejected




surprised



fearful


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## What can teachers do? (preventive)

- Provide students opportunity to talk about bullying and provide safe ways to report.
- Include classroom rules against bullying.
- Enlist their support in defining bullying as unacceptable for our school.
- Develop a **classroom action plan** to ensure that students know what to do when they observe a situation.
- Provide classroom activities and discussion about bullying.
- Focus on developing empathy and respect for others
- Work on friendship, assertive and mediation skills.

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## What can teachers do? (action)

- Take immediate action when bullying is observed.
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- Listen to parents who report bullying.
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## Your 'Take-Home' Toolkit

**In this section we will look at:**

- **Normal Conflict vs. bullying**
- **Cyber-Bullying**
- **If time: “Bullying Thermometer” Activity**
- **Question & Answer Session**
- **Info on future seminars and workshops**



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# Normal Conflict Vs Bullying

## Normal Conflict

VS.

## Bullying

equal power – are friends

happens occasionally

accidental

not serious

equal emotional reaction

not seeking power or attention

not trying to get something

remorse - take responsibility

effort to solve the problem

imbalance of power – are not friends

repeated negative actions

purposeful

serious – threat of physical emotional  
or psychological harm or hurt

emotional reactance on part  
of the victim

seeking power, control

to gain material things or power

no remorse - blames victim

no effort to solve problem

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# Cyber Bullying

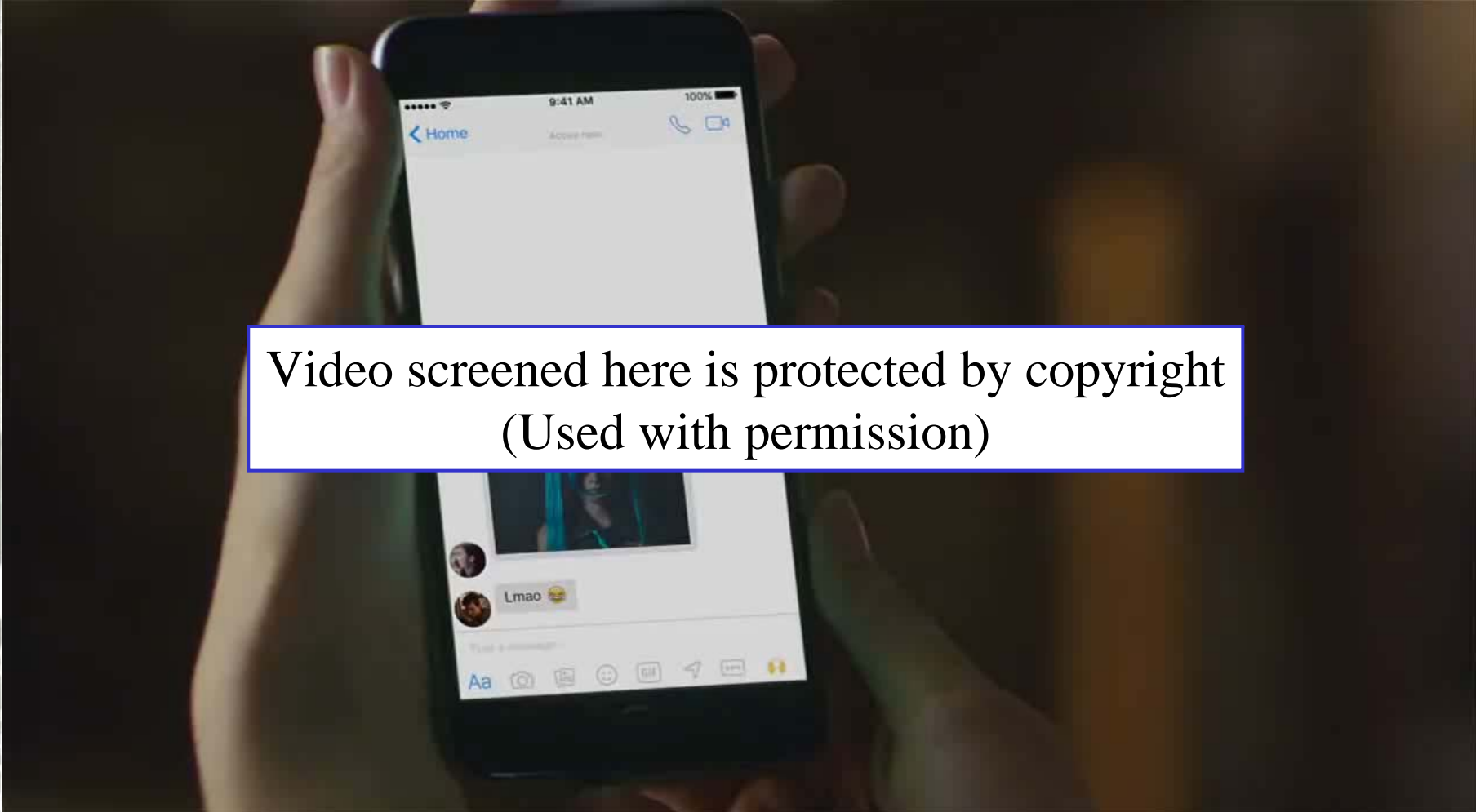
**The main forms of cyber bullying are:**

- **Flaming**
- **Harassment**
- **Denigration**
- **Outing**
- **Exclusion**
- **Cyber stalking**





# Cyber Bullying



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# Bullying Thermometer



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# Conclusion

- 
- **Housekeeping**
  - **Survey forms**
  - **Next event**
  - **Question and Answer session**

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## Activities for Talking About Bullying

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### ACTIVITY **1**

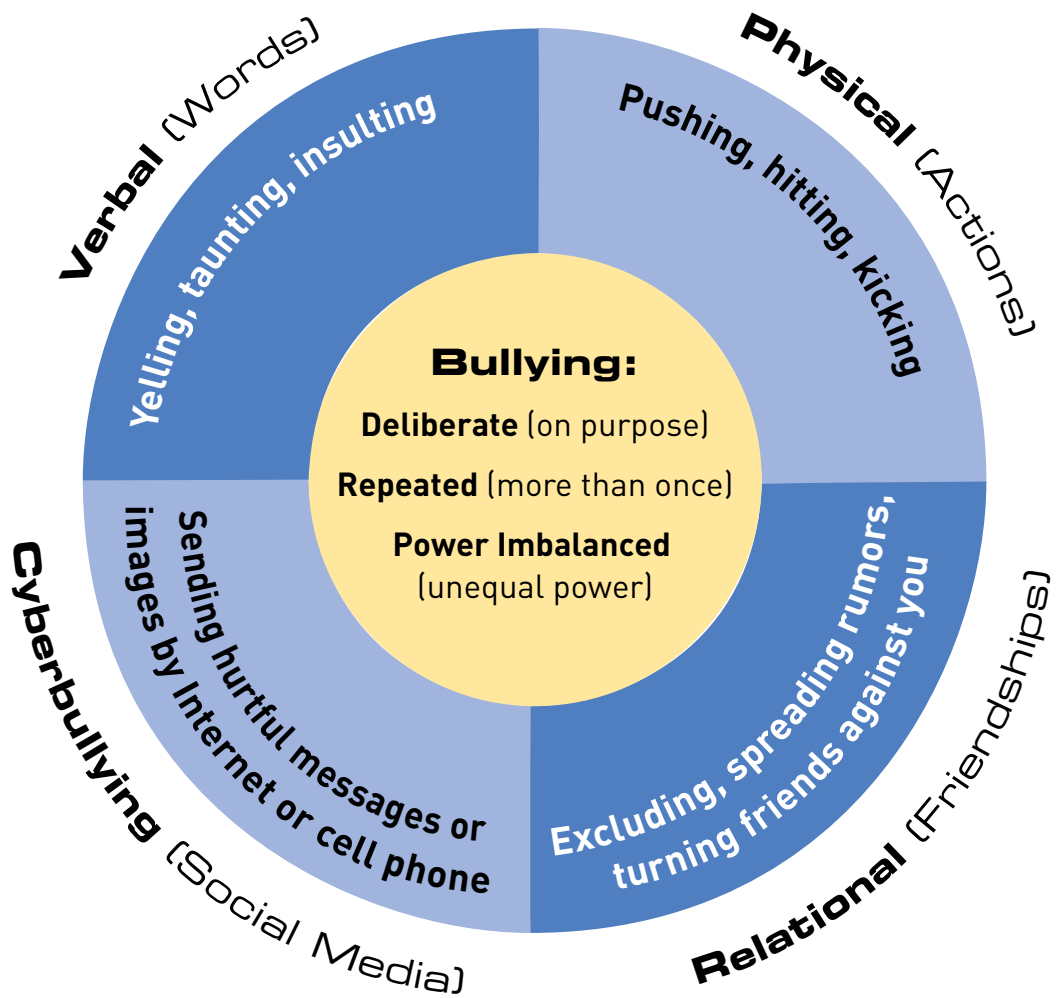
#### WHAT IS BULLYING?



Children who understand what bullying is and the different forms it takes are better able to recognize bullying when they see it or when they become involved in it.



Children who understand that bullying hurts and why it's not permitted are more likely to respond appropriately and ask for help in bullying situations.



Resource: *Eyes on Bullying Toolkit*, p. 9

Use the *What Is Bullying?* chart (see previous page) to help children understand the definition of bullying and the different forms it can take. Help children understand the three characteristics of bullying:

- » **It's on purpose.**
- » **It happens over and over again.**
- » **It involves the abuse of power to hurt others.**

Help children understand the different ways that bullying can happen:

- **Verbal:** Using words to hurt (e.g., name calling, taunting, threatening)
- **Physical:** Using actions to hurt (e.g., hitting, kicking, pushing)
- **Relational:** Using friendships to hurt (e.g., excluding people, spreading rumors, saying someone can't be your friend, turning someone's friends against that person)

*Relational bullying* may be a new concept for children. Talk to children about how telling a classmate that he or she can't play or telling other children not to play with you is a form of bullying when it's done intentionally and repeatedly to hurt someone.

It's important to clarify that children don't need to include everyone in their play and activities every single time. There may be instances when it's really not a good time for someone else to join them. Practice how to say no, kindly and sensitively. For example, they could say, "Sorry, we're right in the middle, but we're almost done—you can play with us as soon as we finish this."

Young children may overgeneralize the concept of bullying by applying it to all forms of aggression, conflicts, and unpleasant behaviors.



**Make sure children know that even if it's not bullying, hurting others by using words, actions, or relationships is not okay and needs to stop.**

ACTIVITY **2** **STORY SWAP**

Children may be reluctant to talk about bullying for a number of reasons, for example:

- » **They don't have the words and concepts to describe it.**
- » **They think it isn't important.**
- » **They are afraid, embarrassed, or ashamed.**
- » **They think that no one will care or be able to help.**

*Story Swap* can give them some helpful language, validate their experiences, reassure them, and direct them toward help.

Start by sharing a story about when you were bullied or witnessed bullying. Hearing a story about an adult's bullying experiences may move a child to reveal his or her own experiences.

Ask the children to share some stories about bullying that happened outside the classroom—something that did not involve their own classmates. Ask them not to use real names.

Acknowledge that it's okay to talk about bullying because it affects everyone, whether we were the bully, whether the bullying happened to us, or whether we watched it happen. Discuss how the stories made them feel—to tell and to hear. Tell children that bullying is always wrong, and it *should not happen*. Using the stories as examples, help children brainstorm suggestions for what can be done to stop bullying.

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ACTIVITY **3** **TEASING OR TAUNTING?**



**Playful teasing among friends is okay, but teasing that hurts is called *taunting*—and if it's repeatedly used to hurt a targeted child, it is a form of bullying.**

To help children understand the difference between teasing and taunting, talk with them about how nicknames can sometimes be fun and sometimes be used to hurt and bully someone. Present the following examples (or

come up with your own) and have the children decide whether each nickname is playful teasing or hurtful taunting:

- » **Scott runs very fast, so the kids call him “Rocket Scott.”**
- » **Jeremy is always last in a race, so the kids call him “Snaily Jerry” or “Slow Poke.”**
- » **Steve is small and cries a lot, so the kids call him “Baby Stevie.”**
- » **Maria is strong, so the kids call her “Wonder Girl.”**
- » **Natalia is smart, so the kids call her “Smarty Pants.”**
- » **Madeline is the biggest kid in the class, so the kids call her “Big Bad Mad.”**

When discussing each nickname, ask the children:

- How can you tell whether a name is playful or hurtful?
- What is the intent of the name-caller? (Is the name-caller trying to be nice or mean? What if the name-caller hurt the child’s feelings but didn’t intend to be mean?)
- How do you think the child with the nickname feels?

Conclude the activity by asking the children for ideas about how to make sure they don’t call classmates hurtful names.

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ACTIVITY **4** **ON PURPOSE?**

This activity helps children understand the difference between making a mistake and hurting someone “on purpose.” We all make mistakes—adults and children alike. We bump into someone by accident, for example, or leave our backpacks where someone could trip. But sometimes people do things that are *intended* to hurt others—things that are done “on purpose” and not by accident. Bullying is an example of an “on purpose” action because it involves intention: A child who bullies is intentionally trying to hurt someone.

Present the following examples (or come up with your own) and ask children to decide if it's a mistake or if it was done on purpose:

- » **Jake steps on Ray's toe by accident and says, "I'm sorry."**
- » **Tony is mad at Robert and stomps hard on his toe.**
- » **Tanya doesn't see Eddie's tower of blocks and knocks it over.**
- » **Christine doesn't like Jane, so she scribbles all over her picture.**
- » **Marco drops his backpack in the hallway and runs out to play. When Anne runs outside to join Marco, she trips over his backpack.**

When discussing each example, ask the children:

- How can you tell whether something is done by accident or on purpose?
- Is the person trying to be nice or mean?
- How do you think the other person in the story feels?

Conclude the activity by reminding children that all of our actions, whether we do them by accident or on purpose, can have an effect on others.

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ACTIVITY **5**

**"YOU CAN'T SAY YOU CAN'T PLAY"**

Talk with the group about how every child deserves to be treated with respect and included in activities. Discuss why the saying "You can't say you can't play" (a concept developed by Vivian Gussin Paley)<sup>3</sup> is important and helps everyone feel included. Explain that sometimes children engage in *relational bullying*—intentionally and repeatedly excluding certain children from their play groups—and this behavior is unacceptable.

<sup>3</sup> Paley, V. G. (1993). *You can't say you can't play*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Have the children brainstorm ways they might respond when someone tells them they can't play or tells others not to let them play. If the children get stuck, you might suggest the following responses:

- Ask if you can play in a little while.
- Say that you will feel sad or angry if you can't play.
- Get other children or an adult to help.

Have the children role-play different scenarios. With an adult playing the child who says, "You can't play with us," have the children practice using the responses they brainstormed.

Then have the children brainstorm and practice things that someone watching the bullying—a bystander—could say or do to help a child who is being excluded. Do the role-playing again, this time focusing on the bystander's response.

Conclude by explaining that children don't need to include everyone in their play and activities every single time. However, they do need to be friendly and courteous to all their classmates; for the most part, the whole class should be included in play groups and activities.

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ACTIVITY

**6**

**STORY TIME**

Reading books out loud to children about bullying provides opportunities to talk about how other children experience and respond to bullying, and how they themselves might respond in similar situations. Here are some questions to get children started talking about a story that involves bullying:

- » **What was the story about?**
- » **Who was doing the bullying?**
- » **Who was getting bullied?**
- » **Who was watching the bullying?**



WHAT YOU CAN DO » **Talk About Bullying**

- » **How did the bullying stop?**
- » **What else could any character have done to help?**
- » **What would you have done?**
- » **Have you ever been in a similar situation?**
- » **How did you feel? What did you do? What helped or didn't help?**

See 14. [Adult Resources and Children's Books](#) for recommended children's books about bullying.

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## Bullying

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### Summary

- Let your child know that bullying is wrong. Take your child's fears and feelings seriously, and help work out ways of dealing with them.
  - Reassure your child that being bullied is not their fault and that something can and will be done about it.
  - Let your child know that bullying happens to lots of children.
  - Protect your child by involving the school or club, or those in charge of wherever the bullying is happening.
  - Help your child to feel good about the other things in his or her life.
- 

Bullying is ongoing physical, emotional or verbal aggression by one or more people against others. It is widespread and commonly found where children gather. It can have detrimental effects on all involved, including the bully.

Schools, early childhood services and sporting or interest groups have a responsibility to ensure a safe environment and should have policies to prevent bullying. Parents can help by believing and supporting their child. This includes helping your child to develop coping techniques and speaking to those in authority where the bullying is occurring.

### **Bullying is more than just physical aggression**

Bullying is the deliberate desire by one or more people to hurt, threaten or frighten someone with words, behaviour or actions. Bullying can vary in its severity. It can include threatening, teasing, name calling, excluding, preventing others from going where they want to or doing what they want to, pushing or hitting, and all forms of physical abuse.

### **Bullying affects everyone involved**

It is now recognised that long-term bullying can be very damaging for all involved. There are three groups involved in bullying who are affected:

- **The child being bullied** – who may experience effects on their health and wellbeing, including their sense of self and place in their world.
- **The bully** – who needs to learn more appropriate ways of interaction and peaceful problem solving.
- **The audience** – who witness bullying.

We are now learning the power of the audience. They are the ones who can stop the bullying from occurring by telling responsible adults what is going on. It is important that all children recognise that bullying is not acceptable, even if they are not involved, and that they can make a difference to help prevent bullying from occurring.

### **Victims of bullying**

The bully can pick on anyone around them. Sometimes, though, they will choose children who seem easy to hurt and who they can successfully intimidate. They may pick on children who:

- Look or are different in some way
  - Are loners
  - Are stressed, either at home or at school
  - Have a disability
  - Struggle with schoolwork or other tasks set for the group
  - Are not good at sport
  - Lack social confidence
  - Are anxious
-

- Prefer books to people
- Are academic
- Are unable to hold their own because they are smaller, weaker or younger.

Occasionally, children provoke other children to bully. Very competitive environments can contribute to bullying.

### **Adults may not be the first to know**

Children who are being bullied may not always tell adults first. They usually tell a friend or sibling before they will confide in other family members. Most children will not tell those in authority at the place where the bullying is occurring. They may be afraid or ashamed, or they may not have any confidence that those in authority can do anything about the bullying.

### **Look out for signs and effects**

Some signs of a child being bullied may include the child:

- Not wanting to go to the place where they are being bullied and finding excuses to stay at home (for example, feeling sick)
- Wanting to travel a different way, rather than the most obvious or quickest way, to avoid the children who are bullying them
- Being very tense, tearful and unhappy after attending the place where they are being bullied
- Talking about hating the place where they are being bullied or not having any friends
- Being covered in bruises or scratches
- Wearing torn clothes and not being able to explain how this happened
- Going without lunch as lunch or lunch money has gone missing
- Refusing to tell you what happens at the place where they are being bullied
- Changing in behaviour and demeanour
- Gaining or losing weight
- Suffering from an eroding confidence
- Producing varied academic achievements, with poor results in a particular area where previously these were much better.

Your child may show other signs such as unhappiness, being teary or withdrawn, or changes in behaviour. These may include problems with sleeping, bedwetting and general regression. These signs may not necessarily mean your child is being bullied, but you need to check out what is worrying your child. You can do this by spending time encouraging your child to talk to you about their worries. This means listening (without interrupting) and believing your child.

### **Parents can help**

There are several things parents can do to help. These include:

- Listen to your child and take their feelings and fears seriously.
- Try not to take everything into your own hands (depending on the age of the child), as this is likely to make your child feel even less in control.
- Help your child to work out their own non-violent ideas and strategies for coping with the problem as a first step.
- It is not helpful to call your child names (such as 'weak' or 'a sook') and don't allow anyone else do so.
- If the bullying involves verbal teasing, you may be able to help your child to learn to ignore it. Practise at home ways to help your child gain confidence (for example, walking past with their head up).
- Help your child think of ways to avoid the situation (for example, by going home a different way or staying with a supportive group).
- Some children are helped by imagining a special wall around them, which protects them so that the hard words bounce off.
- Work on building your child's confidence in things they do well.

- Be very careful that your child does not feel that being bullied is their fault.
- Encourage your child to have different groups of friends and be involved in different activities so they can see clearly where the bullying is occurring and where it is not. This helps children know where they can feel safe and to know it is not their fault.

### **At the place where the bullying is occurring**

Talk to those in authority about the bullying. All schools, early childhood services and sporting or interest groups should have policies that deal with bullying. Some suggestions include:

- Make a list of the things that have happened to your child. Be clear and firm about their suffering. Be prepared to name the children who bully. If bullying persists, write down 'who', 'what', 'where' and 'when'.
- Talk to those in authority about how they deal with bullying – what steps they take to prevent bullying occurring and how they protect children.
- Talk to the appropriate person about what can be done to help your child. Keep in contact until the problem is sorted out.
- If you find it difficult to go to the authorities to talk about this, take a friend with you.

It is important for your child's ongoing wellbeing to get professional support if bullying is an ongoing problem for your child, or if it happens to your child in a lot of different situations and with different children.

### **Why children bully**

Although the research is not entirely clear, it is generally recognised that bullies engage in this behaviour because it enables them to feel important. They may need to have control over something (or someone) to compensate for other areas in their lives where they feel alone or outcast, or they may be being bullied themselves. Bullies learn this behaviour from their environment. Bullies also suffer in the long term through poor academic achievements, poor social skills and poor adult relationships. Without support and guidance to change their bullying behaviour, the child bully can take this behaviour into adulthood.

### **If your child is the bully**

If your child is bullying others, it is worth looking at the home environment and reflecting on a few questions:

- How is discipline handled with your child?
- What problem-solving skills are your children exposed to? How is conflict handled?
- Is your child exposed to helpful ways to communicate with other people?
- Is there unhappiness, arguing, relationship problems, conflict, fighting or violence at home that the child might be witnessing? Do they somehow think they are to blame?
- Is your child worried or frightened about something?
- What inappropriate, perhaps violent, interactions is your child exposed to through the media?

### **Where to get help**

- Your child's school or early childhood service
- **Kids Helpline** Tel. 1800 551 800
- Parentline Tel. 132 289
- Your doctor
- Your local community health centre
- Youth worker

### **Things to remember**

- Let your child know that bullying is wrong. Take your child's fears and feelings seriously, and help work out ways of dealing with them.
- Reassure your child that being bullied is not their fault and that something can and will be done about it.
- Let your child know that bullying happens to lots of children.
- Protect your child by involving the school or club, or those in charge of wherever the bullying is happening.

- Help your child to feel good about the other things in his or her life.

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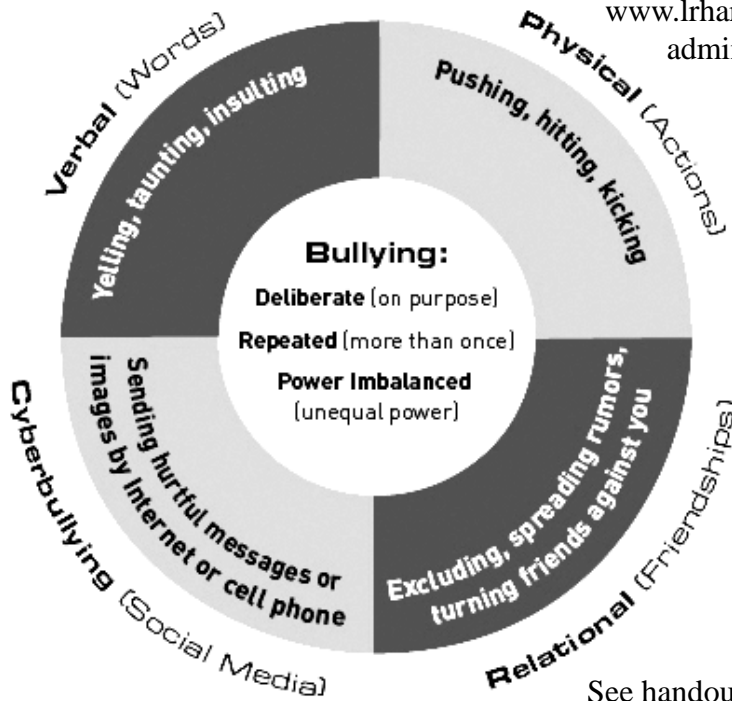
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**Activity: What is Bullying?**



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See handout for instructions.

