Raising Awareness About Bullying
What is Bullying?

Bullying is the deliberate and often repeated attempt to intimidate, embarrass, or harm another person.

- Bullying is a widespread and serious problem that can happen anywhere. It is not a phase children have to go through, it is not "just messing around", and it is not something to grow out of. Bullying can cause serious and lasting harm.
Definitions of bullying

- Although definitions of bullying vary, most agree that bullying involves:
  - **Imbalance of Power**: people who bully use their power to control or harm and the people being bullied may have a hard time defending themselves.
  - **Intent to Cause Harm**: actions done by accident are not bullying; the person bullying has a goal to cause harm.
  - **Repetition**: incidents of bullying happen to the same person over and over by the same person or group.
### Types of bullying

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<tr>
<th>Types of Bullying</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Verbal</strong></td>
<td>name-calling, teasing</td>
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<td><strong>Social</strong></td>
<td>spreading rumors, leaving people out on purpose, breaking up friendships</td>
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<td><strong>Physical</strong></td>
<td>hitting, punching, shoving</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cyber bullying</strong></td>
<td>using the Internet, mobile phones or other digital technologies to harm others</td>
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An act of bullying may fit into more than one of these groups.
Effects of Bullying

- On any given school day, approximately 160,000 kids skip school to avoid being picked on by their peers.
- A much larger face the agony in silence.
- Some students experience stress related illnesses including anxiety, headaches, stomach issues, panic attacks, and depression.
- More than 4,000 teens commit suicide each year and are linked to bullying.
Effects of Bullying

- Studies show that all three participant groups (bullies, victims, bystanders) are affected by bullying. Bystanders can feel a sense of powerlessness, fear of being victimized, and anxiety that they'll do the wrong thing in the social group. In addition, they can become desensitized to negative behavior and many repress feelings of empathy for bullying victims.
Facts About Bullying

- Most bullying (2-3 times as much) happens in school rather than on the way to/from school; generally bullying during school hours occurs where there is limited or no adult supervision, including lunchtime, between class periods, and recess.

- Victims of bullying most likely keep it to themselves: many youth feel disrespected by authority figures and may not disclose violent incidents because of feelings of distrust. They often have a lack of confidence that adults can, or will, do their best to protect them from harm.
Facts About Bullying

- Students are often advised to work it out on their own but without support or cues on how to do that. Studies show that bullying is often tacitly accepted by adults and many even say that bullying helps "build character."
Signs your child is being bullied

- Comes home with damaged or missing clothing or other belongings
- Reports losing items such as books, electronics, clothing, or jewelry
- Has unexplained injuries
- Complains frequently of headaches, stomachaches, or feeling sick
- Has trouble sleeping or has frequent bad dreams
- Has changes in eating habits
- Hurts themselves
- Are very hungry after school from not eating their lunch
- Runs away from home
<table>
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<th>Signs your child is being bullied</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Loses interest in visiting or talking with friends</td>
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<td>• Is afraid of going to school or other activities with peers</td>
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<td>• Loses interest in school work or begins to do poorly in school</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Appears sad, moody, angry, anxious or depressed when they come home</td>
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<td>• Talks about suicide</td>
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<td>• Feels helpless</td>
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<td>• Often feels like they are not good enough</td>
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<td>• Blames themselves for their problems</td>
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<td>• Suddenly has fewer friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Avoids certain places</td>
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<td>• Acts differently than usual</td>
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Signs your child is a bully

- Becomes violent with others
- Gets into physical or verbal fights with others
- Gets sent to the principal’s office or detention a lot
- Has extra money or new belongings that cannot be explained
- Is quick to blame others
- Will not accept responsibility for their actions
- Has friends who bully others
- Needs to win or be best at everything
What Can We Do About Bullying?
What You Can Do To Stop Your Child From Bullying Others

- Take it seriously. Don't treat bullying as a passing phase. Even if you're not worried about long-lasting effects on your child, another child is being hurt.
- Talk to your child to find out why he or she is bullying. Often, children bully when they feel sad, angry, lonely, or insecure and many times major changes at home or school may bring on these feelings.
- Help build empathy for others and talk to your child about how it feels to be bullied.
- Ask a teacher or a school counselor if your child is facing any problems at school, such as if your child is struggling with a particular subject or has difficulty making friends. Ask them for advice on how you and your child can work through the problem.
- Ask yourself if someone at home is bullying your child. Often, kids who bully are bullied themselves by a parent, family member, or another adult.
How to Prevent Your Child From Getting Bullied

- Teach your children early on to steer clear of youth with bullying behavior.
- Monitor your child’s access to the internet and check in on their communication with their peers.
- Get to know your child’s friends.
- Communicate with teachers and school staff as often as possible.
- Respond to your children's concerns and fears with patience, love, and support.
- If your child is a victim of bullying at school, inform school officials immediately.
# Tips for Helping Children Deal with Bullies

- Teach your children to be assertive rather than aggressive or violent when confronted by a bully. Instruct them to walk away and get help from an adult in more dangerous situations. Practice various responses with your children through role-playing.

- Teach your children to never defend themselves from bullies with a gun or other weapon.

- Keep communication lines open with your children. Encourage your children to share information about school and school-related activities.

- Pay attention to the following symptoms that may indicate your child is being bullied: withdrawal, abrupt lack of interest in school, a drop in grades, or signs of physical abuse.

- Encourage your child to communicate with school staff if they are feeling bullied. Most schools have a bullying program with steps to take when this occurs.
If Your Child Is Being Bullied……

- Call or set up an appointment to talk with your child’s teacher. He or she will probably be in the best position to understand the relationships between your child and other peers at school. Share your concerns about your child and ask the teacher such questions as:
  - "How does my child get along with other students in his or her class?"
  - "With whom does he or she spend free time?"
  - "Have you noticed or have you ever suspected that my child is bullied by other students?" Give examples of some ways that children can be bullied to be sure that the teacher is not focusing only on one kind of bullying (such as physical bullying).
The most important step you can take is Talking to your child

- Talk openly with your child on a regular basis about what they are going through with their peers.

**Some topics and questions:**
- “How would you react if you saw a classmate getting bullied? Would it make a difference if you did not know that person?”
- "I’m worried about you. Are there any kids at school who may be picking on you or bullying you?"
- "Are there any kids at school who tease you in a mean way?"
- "Are there any kids at school who leave you out or exclude you on purpose?"
- "Do you have any special friends at school this year? Who are they? Who do you hang out with?"
- "Are there any kids at school who you really don’t like? Why don’t you like them? Do they ever pick on you or leave you out of things?"
Talking to your Child

- **Keep talking.** Initiate conversations about issues of difference, and find ways to bring those topics up with your child. Use current issues from the news, such as the immigration debate or same-sex marriage, to learn more about your child’s views.

- **Stay involved.** Messages about differences exist all around your teen: the Internet, songs, music videos, reality shows, ads and commercials, social cliques at school. Know the websites your teen enjoys visiting; take time to listen to or watch the music and shows they enjoy. Then discuss the messages they send. Ask your teen about the group or groups she most identifies with at school. Discuss the labels or stereotypes that are associated with such groups.

- **Live congruently.** Discussing the importance of valuing difference is essential, but modeling this message is even more vital. Evaluate your own circle of friends or the beliefs you hold about certain groups of people. Do your actions match the values you discuss with your teen? Teens are more likely to be influenced by what you do than what you say, so it’s important for your words and behaviors to be congruent.
Talking to your Child

- **Broaden opportunities.** It may be natural for teens to stick to groups they feel most comfortable with during the school day. These often are the people they identify as being most like themselves. Provide other opportunities for your teen to interact with peers from different backgrounds. Suggest volunteer, extracurricular, worship and work opportunities that will broaden your teen’s social circle.

- **Encourage activism.** Promote ways for your teen to get involved in causes he cares about. When young people know they have a voice in their community, they are empowered to help resolve issues of injustice.
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