

notMYkid™

INSPIRING POSITIVE LIFE CHOICES

BULLYING ... WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Quick Facts and
Conversation Starters





Signs of Teen Cruelty



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 himself/herself
- Is very hungry after school from not eating their lunch
- Runs away from home
- Acts differently than usual
- Is afraid of going to school or other activities with peers
- Loses interest in schoolwork or begins to do poorly in school
- Appears sad, moody, angry, anxious or depressed when they come home
- Talks about suicide
- Feels helpless
- Often feels like they are not good enough
- Blames himself/herself for their problems
- Suddenly has fewer friends
- Loses interest in visiting or talking with friends
- Avoids certain places

Bullying Others:

- 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

Bullying Resources:

notmykid.org

helpguide.org

stopbullying.org

stopcyberbullying.org

bullypolice.org

tolerance.org

Teen Lifeline: (602) 248 TEEN

<http://www.azleg.gov/legtext/50leg/1r/bills/hb2415h.pdf>



AZ Bullying Legislation (House Bill 2415)

Arizona schools are required to:

Define

1. Clearly define “harassment,” “intimidation,” and “bullying”
2. Formal description of disciplinary procedures for employees who fail to report bullying
3. Procedures designed to protect the health and safety of students who are physically harmed as a result of the incidents

Report

1. Provide incident forms for faculty, students, and parents to report bullying and intimidation
2. Faculty must report in writing incidents of harassment, intimidation, or bullying
3. Administration must maintain documentation of all bullying for a minimum of 6 years

Implement

1. At the beginning of each school year, provide students with written copy of rights, protections, and support services available to any alleged victim of bullying
2. Prohibit cyber-bullying on school computers, networks, forums, and mailing lists



How to intervene if your child is being bullied

Listen:

- Show concern and empathy
- Do not lecture or overreact
- Reassure them that you love, care for, and support them

Communicate:

- Encourage open communication
- Instruct them to speak with school staff
 - **Telling is not tattling!**
- Reinforce positive self-talk

Document / Report:

- Save all communications
- After each incident, record: names, dates, locations and who you reported the incident to
- Report the bullying to a teacher, school / district administrator, at www.bullystoppers.com, or to the local police

Get Involved:

- Encourage positive activities and self-expression
- Follow up with every incident
- Teach and model conflict resolution

How to intervene if your child is the bully

Monitor

- Know your kid's friends, along with their siblings and families
- Be aware of internet use and what kids are posting online
- Continually check your kid's room and car
- Discuss family values and boundaries

Talk

- Calmly, let them know that you do not tolerate their behavior
- Discuss legal ramifications
- Discuss how to show empathy and compassion

Be Involved

- Their behavior is your responsibility
- Hold them accountable to age appropriate, predetermined consequences
- Work with the school

Seek Help

- From school, church, community, or health care professionals. There may be underlying issues perpetuating the behavior
- Contact police when if child becomes violent or if they makes physical threats

Talking to Teens about Bullying

Here is a list of questions that you can ask your child as an easy way to start a conversation about bullying. **They are non-accusatory and open-ended, so you are more likely to start a two-way conversation.**

- How often do you observe cruel behavior online or at school?
- How many of your friends have been cruel to another kid?
- Have you ever had someone be cruel or bully you?
- What is the most insulting name you hear kids call each other?
- Have you ever seen a kid “stand up” for a person being bullied at your school?

Here are some other tips on talking to your kids about bullying:

1. **Seize the moment.** Take advantage of any opportunity to talk to your kids. Maybe your child will share the story of a ninth-grader who was caught bullying another kid at school. Or, maybe over dinner one night your child discloses that one of their friends is “doing things” with her boyfriend. Use these moments to talk honestly and openly with your kids about these topics. Ask them open-ended questions to foster further conversation, “What do you think of what your friend is doing?,” or “What do you think might happen to the ninth grader?” Kids are curious by nature; allow the conversation to flow freely between you and your child.
2. **Listen more than speaking.** Encourage your kids to talk to you by listening to them without overreacting when they open up to you, it will help them feel more comfortable talking to you. You may be surprised to find out how much your child already knows about teen cruelty, drugs, alcohol, and sex when you really listen to them. Be aware of your tone and the length of your responses, your child may perceive a long response as a lecture and not feel comfortable opening up again.
3. **Ask your child what he or she knows.** Ask questions such as “What have you heard about bullying from your friends and teachers?” Let your child answer the question without interrupting and then acknowledge them for their openness. Take opportunities such as these to start a two-way conversation. Be sure to educate yourself prior to this conversation, so you can answer all of your child’s questions accurately. If you don’t know an answer, don’t guess, be honest and tell your child you will find out the answer or you risk losing their confidence.
4. **Use current events** such as television shows and news reports, as conversation starters. Share a news story or local incident with your child – a kid being arrested for bullying, a kid committing suicide as a result of being bullied – to start a conversation. Ask your child how they would feel if they were arrested or caused another kid to feel hopeless because they were bullying others. How would this affect their future? You may want to discuss the risks and possible catastrophic consequences from poor decisions.
5. **Role play with your kids.** Give your child words and steps to take if situations arise where bullying is occurring. It will be easier for your child to respond if they have a few planned phrases and a strategy for leaving the situation.