



Self-Worth – Bullying

Bullying - Introduction

Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social, or psychological behaviour that has a harmful effect on an individual. It often involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons.¹

Bullying can be perpetrated as acts of humiliation, domination, intimidation, victimisation, and all forms of harassment including those based on gender, race, disability, and sexual orientation. Bullying of any form and for any reason can have a long-term effect on all parties: victims, perpetrators and bystanders.

Characteristics of bullying

Bullying can occur in many ways, including:

- Keeping someone out of a group (online or offline).
- Giving nasty looks, making rude gestures, calling names, being rude and impolite and constant negative teasing.
- Spreading rumours or lies, or misrepresenting someone (i.e. using their Facebook account to post messages as if it were them).
- ‘Messing around’ that goes too far.
- Harassing someone based on their race, gender, religion, sexual orientation or a disability.
- Intentionally and repeatedly hurting someone.
- Intentionally stalking someone.
- Taking advantage of any power over someone else.

Why is bullying a serious problem?

According to Dr Lars Madsen, clinical advisor to The MindShift Foundation, bullying is related to low self-worth, suicidal ideation, anger, frustration, and a variety of other emotional and psychological problems.

According to Dr Madsen, “Bullying has become a serious problem and affects everyone—those who are bullied, those who bully, and those who witness bullying. Bullying is linked to many negative outcomes including serious impacts on mental health, substance abuse and even suicide. It affects one’s life at whatever age we are. We need to acknowledge this as a serious problem as the effects are long-lasting and significant.”



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What can you and your family do when bullying occurs?

- Make it clear to your friends that you won't be involved in bullying behaviour.
- Never stand by, watch or encourage bullying behaviour.
- Do not harass, tease or spread gossip about others; this includes bullying behaviour on social networking sites like Facebook, etc.
- Never forward or respond to messages or photos that may be offensive or upsetting to an individual.
- Support a person who is being bullied. This may involve going with them to seek help, or providing them with information on their situation.
- Report bullying behaviour to someone in a position of authority, or someone you trust you to take appropriate action. For example: a school teacher, HR department, manager, etc.
- If the bullying is causing you to fear for your safety, report it to the police.

Where to get help

Don't be afraid to let someone know that you are being bullied. If you are being bullied at school, find a trusted teacher, school psychologist, guidance counsellor, or administrator with whom you can speak.ⁱⁱ If you are being bullied at work, seek out your supervisor, department manager, workplace safety representative or human resources manager.

Always remember that you are not alone. Your doctor or registered health professional are also able to help.

Visit our online resource page for further information. Here you will find a list of community organisations that can provide support to those who are feeling the effects of bullying.
<http://mindshift.org.au/suggested-links/>.

Things to remember

Bullying can happen anywhere from school, travelling to and from school, in sporting teams, between neighbours, in general public, online and in the workplace.

There are many things you can do if you're being bullied. Different strategies can work in different situations, so research your best options, talk to people you trust and take appropriate action. Bullying is not acceptable and not something that you should endure once, let alone repeatedly.



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In summary

Bullying occurs when people repeatedly and intentionally use words or actions against someone or a group of people in order to cause distress and display dominance. It can cause terrible risks to personal wellbeing. Any type of bullying is unacceptable and there are steps that can be taken.

Updates and Further information

For the latest updates and further information please visit www.mindshift.org.au.

Our Mission

It is our mission to ensure that every person has access to the resources available to build healthy self-worth, to have a positive sense of self, and to find meaning in life.

Disclaimer

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ⁱ Please see our Cyberbullying resource for further information on bullying via communication and online technologies.

ⁱⁱ Please see our Children and Bullying resource for further information.