

PARENTS

RESOURCE GUIDE



BULLY PROOF

anti-bullying strategies for school and online

did you know?

- 85% of bullying episodes occur in the context of peer group.
- Bullying stops in less than 10 seconds, 57% of the time when peers intervene on behalf of the target.
- Peers intervene in significantly more bullying episodes than adults (11% of episodes verses 4%)
- Bullying is reduced in a school if the principal and school leaders are committed to reducing bullying.
- Bullies have little empathy for their victims and show little remorse about bullying.
- Victimization decreases across grade levels: 26% of grades 1-3 children report victimisation compared to 15% of grades 4-6 and 12% of grades 7-8 children.
- Bullies often come from homes that are neglectful, hostile and use harsh punishment. Bullying may be learned from observing parental conflict.
- Younger students experience for direct bullying, whereas older students experience more indirect bullying.
- Boys report more physical forms of bullying. Girls tend to be bullied in indirect ways, such as gossip and exclusion.
- Both boys and girls who are targeted report symptoms of depression, such as sadness and loss of interest in activities.
- Bullies, who are usually victims themselves, are often most insecure, the least likeable and the most unsuccessful in school.

SOME USEFUL QUESTIONS

Below is a list of some useful questions that can act as a guide when asking a child or children who have hurt someone. These questions are designed to enable the child to think of their actions, consequences and how the person felt when they were targeted. Remember, this is only a guide.



These questions will help them to:

- Acknowledge their own actions and the consequences they have on themselves and others.
- Develop a sense of empathy for their target. i.e. "I'm sure they don't want to go through that again" and "I hurt someone."
- Change their actions to stay out of trouble.
- Learn to trust and form relationships with helping adults.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

'Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, who have more power at the time, deliberately upset or hurt another person, their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion'

Department of Education

REASONS WHY SOME KIDS BULLY:

- **Home life**
Some children come from troubled homes.
- **Retaliation**
Many people will treat others the way they were treated.
- **They don't know how to deal with their anger/hurt**
'Hurting people hurt people'
- **They don't like themselves**
Many kids feel vulnerable and have low self-worth
- **Power**
They dominate through power and control



FORMS OF BULLYING

- **Physical fighting**
- **Deliberately excluding people**
- **Stealing or damaging property**
- **Abusive words**
Teasing someone ...
(a) based on physical appearance
(b) via technology

WHAT IS CYBER BULLYING?

'Using the computer or other electronic devices to intimidate, threaten or humiliate another individual.'

Cyber Bully Alert

Organisation dedicated to internet safety, security and privacy





1. Keep the computer in a common area of the home

Do not allow it in your children's bedrooms. Monitor their online usage.

2. Learn how various social networking websites work

Become familiar with the common websites e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc. Ask your children if they will show you their profile pages.

3. Talk regularly and specifically about online issues

Let them know they can come to you for help if anything is inappropriate, upsetting, or dangerous.

4. Build trust with your children

Set time limits, explain your reasons for them, and discuss rules for online safety and Internet use. Ask your children to contribute to establishing the rules; then they'll be more inclined to follow them.

5. Tell your children not to respond

However, do not delete any of the messages. Instead, print out all the messages, including the e-mail addresses or online screen names of the cyberbully. You will need the messages to verify and prove there is cyberbullying.

6. Don't overreact by blaming your children

If they are being bullied, be supportive and understanding. Find out how long the bullying has been going on and ensure that you'll work together to find a solution. Let your children know they are not to blame for being bullied.

7. Don't underreact

Don't respond by telling your children to "shrug it off" or just deal with the bullying. The emotional pain of being bullied is very real and can have long-lasting effects.

8. Don't threaten to take away your children's computers

This only forces kids to be more secretive

9. Talk to your school

Including teachers, chaplains, counsellors, etc. so they can keep an eye out for bullying during the school day.

10. Respond

If there are threats of physical violence or the bullying continues to escalate, get serious.



CYBER SAEFTY TIPS – for parents of kids under 10

1. Set search sites to “safe search”

Technology can be a useful tool but needs to be used safely

2. Keep screen time to a minimum

Encourage kids to be kids – get outside and explore the backyard, park, etc. and remind them it is better to love life not just watch others living it

3. Explain the basics of polite online behaviour

Tell your kids that things like lying, telling secrets, and being mean still hurt in on the web.

4. Tell kids not to share passwords with their friends



CYBER SAEFTY TIPS – for parents of kids 10-13

1. Monitor their use

See what your kids are posting, and check their mobile messages.

2. Tell your kids what to do if they’re harassed

They shouldn’t respond or retaliate, they should block bullies immediately, and they should tell you or a trusted adult. They shouldn’t delete the messages because the content may need to be reported to a phone or Internet service provider.

3. If your kid is doing the bullying, establish strict consequences and stick to them

That goes for rude or sexual comments about teachers, friends, and relatives.

4. Remind kids that all private information can be made public

Posts on friends’ profiles, private IMs, intimate photos, and in-jokes can all be copied and shared. If they don’t want the world to see it, they better not post or send it.

5. Tell them not to stir up trouble

Chat sessions can get ugly fast. Make sure your kids are respectful because hurtful retaliation happens all the time.

PARENT TOOL KIT

- ✓ Sit down and ask yourself: “What are we doing well?” and “What do we need to add /improve/focus upon?”
- ✓ Encourage analysis of influences e.g. the media – generate filters to separate the good and the bad
- ✓ Spend time together – have a specific family time e.g. Sunday afternoon
- ✓ Search for a foundation in life – begin by asking first order questions – consistently communicate it
- ✓ Ask older people of their experiences – include patriarchs
- ✓ Draw from the positives of a conventional small community where we teach young people to (1) respect elders – spend time with them, seek counsel, etc. and (2) give responsibility to them towards younger children – be a role model, give counsel, etc.
- ✓ Draw from the existing wider community – what groups can you get involved in?
- ✓ Give positive messages about who (not what) they are – their soul opposed to their image
- ✓ Teach empathy – ask “how would you feel if...?”
- ✓ What’s life about? Fulfillment or happiness? What’s the difference? Discuss
- ✓ Finally, share experiences of how you bounced back?

PHILOSOPHY FOR PARENTING

- ✓ My children are a precious gift, not an inconvenience. I have the privilege of shaping them into mature positive contributing adults
- ✓ This requires time, not money. Children spell love T.I.M.E. – I will give them both lity and quantity time
- ✓ My marriage and our home is predominantly about family and its needs – not about ‘me’ and my needs
- ✓ Our family will have strong reference points and values
- ✓ Our family will have a clear and well thought through worldview on which to base our values and hope



BULLY PROOFING YOUR KIDS

Key factors that help build resilience in young people who have been bullied

A resource for parents and teachers

“When things go wrong, being resilient is like a person who has a bungee rope around them to bounce back when things get tough and to maintain their idea of who they are.”

Professor Andrew Fuller

Resilience ...

Resilience is important to us:

- ✓ to be happy
- ✓ to survive
- ✓ to be successful
- ✓ to deal with the hard times of life
- ✓ to positively influence others

Resilience is managing complex issues of difficulty, duress, trauma or disappointment with:

- ✓ Well-developed problem-solving skills
- ✓ Persistence of will
- ✓ Founded on hope

WHAT DOES THE BUNGEE ROPE LOOK LIKE?

Family

- Feeling loved by your family – Child is affirmed, encouraged and disciplined
- Feeling your family respects your decisions – e.g. allowing for age appropriate autonomy
- Family structure is sound and extended
- Family heritage and values system are positive
- Family foundation of hope is articulated and understood

Education

- School and teachers are a great resource. The school is focused on ensuring a positive & enriching experience – not just academics
- Students feel respected by teachers. Having adults who listen & believe in them
- Getting right feedback as well as input

Community

Positive peer connectedness generates a sense of belonging and being part of something bigger

The crucial element is why they are accepted. Successful community is reliant on acceptance of the person not their performance or skill e.g. communities of faith

Core foundations

Sense of meaning, purpose, values & direction – needs to be reliable, strong, tried and tested.

Enables a sense of having something bigger than you – bigger than circumstances, emotions, set-backs and disappointment

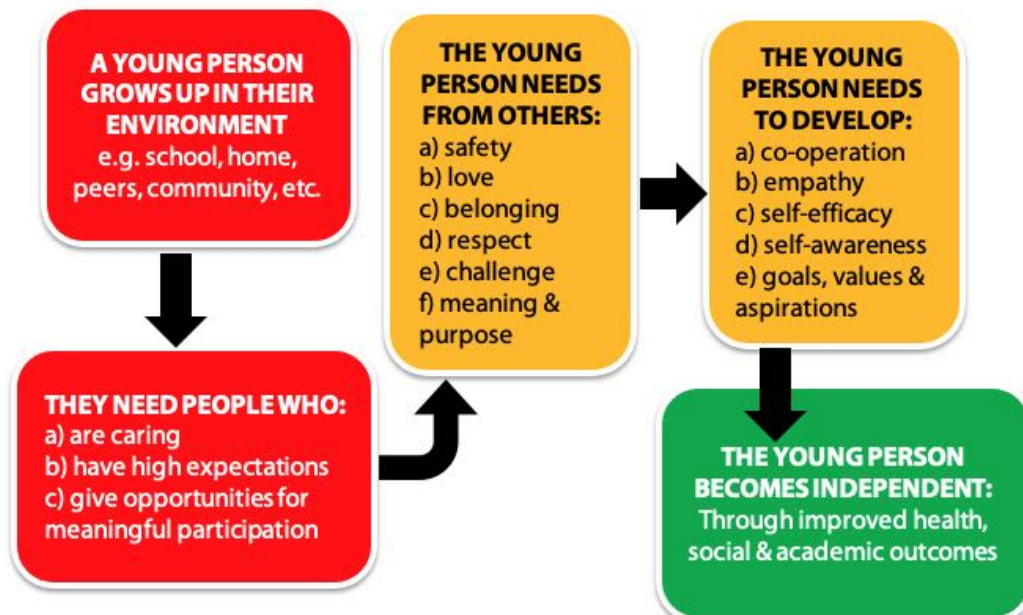
KEY STEPS TO PREVENTION

- ✓ Be sensitive to the stress in your children's lives, help them cope and for them to find solutions
- ✓ Understand when and why your children are bored and help relieve their boredom
- ✓ Have boundaries – e.g. limit the amount of money your children have to spend and monitor how that money is spent
- ✓ Know who your children's friends are
- ✓ Be engaged in your children's lives: help them with their homework, attend their sports events, participate in activities together, and talk to them about issues like drugs and alcohol

KEY STEPS TO PREVENTION OF BULLYING

Things that can build on protective factors and minimise risk factors (Burton) are:

- ✓ **Caring Relationships** (compassion, understanding, respect and interest)
- ✓ **High Expectation messages** (firm guidance, structure and challenge, focus on strengths and assets rather than negatives)
- ✓ **Opportunities for meaningful participation** (opportunities for valued responsibilities, making decisions, giving voice and being heard, contributing one's talents to the community)



Therefore, the language of resiliency is:

- *I have ... caring relationships*
- *I am ... high expectation messages*
- *I can ... meaningful participation*

PARENT CHECKLIST

- I listen to my children and take an interest in their thoughts and opinions. I have gathered specific information about each of my children. I know their favourite things.
- I am aware of what they are scared of, what makes them laugh and what is special about their personality
- I don't sweat the small stuff but choose my battles carefully
- I know what to expect from my child's age group. I am aware of what is normal developmentally
- I feel the atmosphere in our home is warm, relaxed and positive
- We regularly do fun things together
- I take time to enrich my own life
- I give physical affection to my children
- As parents we spend time on our relationship
- We are developing a family culture of regular traditions
- We support each other in our parenting
- I have communicated our family rules
- There is some structure and routine in our home
- I speak encouraging words to my children
- I am careful to follow through on my words
- I allow my children to learn from consequences rather than my anger
- I give my children opportunities to solve their own problems
- I set time aside to talk to my children about their day – what they have liked and what they have found hard
- We eat meals together regularly each week with the television off