

IDENTIFYING & REPORTING BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING

It is important to understand the dangers regarding bullying, cyberbullying, and digital abuse, as well as related indicators, because children often do not report these behaviors.

1 in 5 students experience bullying, and 5 in 10 experience cyberbullying.

1 in 3 teens consider the Internet as important as air, water, food and shelter.

Bullying is repeated acts of hostility or aggression where there is a real or perceived imbalance of power and the victim cannot defend himself or herself.

There are 4 types of bullying:

- Physical Bullying: Physical force or contact, such as, kicking, or shoving.
- Verbal: Name-calling, teasing, or threatening.
- Social/Relational: Aims to damage someone's relationships or social standing, such as spreading rumors or excluding others.
- Digital: Also known as "Cyberbullying."

Cyberbullying is repeated, threatening or harassing behavior that occurs online via the Internet or cellphone and can include:

- Sending harassing messages
- Posting false information
- Posting private pictures
- Gaining someone's trust to impersonate them and post their private information online

It differs from traditional bullying by being potentially anonymous, reaching a large audience quickly, and the content being difficult to remove, which can make it more hurtful. It can cause significant emotional and mental health issues, and sometimes it crosses into unlawful or criminal behavior.

Indicators of Bullying

- Frequent cuts or bruises
- Injuries without adequate explanation
- Voices frequent physical complaints
- Changes in sleeping/eating patterns
- Ripped/torn clothing upon return from school or other activity
- Missing items or valuables
- Suddenly reluctant to go to school or participate in sports/other activities
- Frequently loses money or other possessions
- Frequently spends time alone
- Seems sad or depressed
- Mentions or shows signs of wanting to harm themselves

Indicators of Digital/Cyberbullying

- Spends large amounts of time online, especially at night or when alone
- Receives an excessive amount of email or text messages
- Quickly exits computer or cell phone when parent or guardian approaches
- Withdrawn or depressed
- Does not want to go to school



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Intervention Approaches			
A child/teen who bullies others	A child/teen experiencing bullying	A child/teen who cyberbullies others	A child/teen experiencing cyberbullying
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set clear rules, guidelines Teach empathy and acceptance of differences Connect bully with positive peers Model appropriate behavior and provide supervision Follow policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open lines of communication Teach response strategies Connect with helpful and supportive friends/peers Create safety plan; establish safe place, connect with Safe Adults, and teach the MBF 5 Safety Rules DO NOT use mediation or peer mediation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set clear rules, guidelines Teach empathy and acceptance of differences Connect them with positive peers Model appropriate behavior and provide supervision, monitoring technology use Follow policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open lines of communication Teach response strategies Connect with helpful and supportive friends Create safety plan; establish safe place, connect with Safe Adults, teach the MBF 5 Safety Rules DO NOT use mediation or peer mediation

As a general guideline, it is important to understand what interventions are recommended when bullying occurs. (See the chart above for general information). Here are steps you can take to intervene and prevent bullying in the future:

- **Ensure the proper policies and procedures are in place and that all staff are trained to recognize and respond appropriately to bullying.**
- Ensure kids know how to report bullying; Provide a way for reporting anonymously.
- **Listen, document details, and take reports of bullying seriously.**
- Understand that with suspicions of bullying, children will often deny it because they fear adult intervention will escalate the situation.
- **Check the facts for yourself; be supportive while seeking details; do not accuse the target of bullying or any wrongdoing such as, “You should stand up for yourself,” or “You should have told someone sooner.”**
- Do not deny or minimize the problem; respond with a firm but kind response that bullying is not tolerated.
- **Help the child/teen being bullied brainstorm strategies to deal with a child who bullies effectively such as using resistance strategies (saying “stop” confidently, buddying up with a friend, using humor), or seeking out a Safe Adult who will intervene. Ignoring the bully or allowing the bullying to continue will not make it stop; this usually has the opposite effect.**
- Remember, some social experiences, such as teasing and choosing certain friends over others, are developmentally normal behaviors for school-aged children. Group settings are not only for academic learning, but also for learning about social relationships and understanding how to choose friends wisely.
- **Encourage the targeted child to get involved in activities they enjoy to meet new people, both within and outside of school.**
- Provide increased supervision in places where supervision is low and social interaction is high, such as playgrounds, cafeterias, and bathrooms.
- **Teach prevention programs that incorporate bullying prevention and include Bystander education.**