

Managing a Bully

What is bullying?

Bullying is the belittling, fault-finding, humiliating, and criticizing imparted by one person upon another, giving the one person power over the other.

- It can be committed by peers of children and youth at school and in other social situations but also by siblings, parents, or children at home; by managers, co-workers, or clients at work; in the care of others; anywhere.
- It is different from assault or harassment in that it is an accumulation of small incidents over a long period of time. Teasing can become bullying when it is repetitive and consciously intended to hurt another.
- It can cause stress and anxiety, sleeplessness, skin problems, constant fatigue, poor concentration, anger, irritability, withdrawal, and other health-related conditions.
- It can have long-lasting repercussions.
- It can begin as early as preschool and can cause children to fear school.
- It can be verbal (name-calling, making threats), psychological (spreading rumors, excluding), and/or physical (hitting, pushing).

Every person has the right to feel safe and secure.

The problem always lies with the bully, not with the person who is being bullied. Bullying is an issue of power. Everyone has the right to live bully-free.

Ways to manage when a bully is present

- *Ignore the bully; walk away when the bullying starts.*
- *Spend time in groups or with friends.*
- *Talk to an adult—a parent, teacher, principal, coach, pastor.*

When someone you know is being bullied

If someone else is being bullied, try to stop it. If you let it continue, you're saying that bullying is all right with you. Treat others the way you would want to be treated.

Helping a child who is bullied

- Listen and give the child space to talk.
- Help the child problem-solve and find ways to respond in an effective manner.
- Model the behavior you expect.
- Intervene when you see unacceptable behavior.
- When bullying is taking place in a school setting, speak up for a child to teachers and administrators.

Remember . . .

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Romans 12:14–18

In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.

Matthew 7:12

If you have been a bully, remember that it is always best to treat others the way you would want to be treated. Try to think of ways to feel good that do not involve bullying others.

Additional Resources

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Office of Youth Ministry. Visit www.pcusa.org/youthministry for resources and information on issues related to young people.

"Bullying: An Early—and Pervasive—Form of Violence" in *Steps Along the Way: Living as Peacemakers in a Violent World* (Louisville: Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, 2003). PDS# 70-270-03-011. To order call 1-800-524-2612.



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