



PREVENTING BULLYING

Through Science, Policy, and Practice



YOUTH

Bullying is a public health problem.

Bullying has long been tolerated by many people as a rite of passage among children and teens. But bullying is not a normal part of childhood. It is a serious public health problem. ***Bullying harms the child who is bullied, the child who is the bully, and the bystanders.***

There are four main types of bullying:

1. **Physical bullying** involves the use of physical force (such as shoving, hitting, spitting, pushing, and tripping).
2. **Verbal bullying** involves words or writing that cause harm (such as taunting, name calling, offensive notes or hand gestures, verbal threats).
3. **Relational bullying** is behavior designed to harm the reputation and relationships of the targeted youth (such as social isolation, rumor-spreading, posting mean comments or pictures online).
4. **Damage to property** is theft or damaging of the target youth's property by the bully in order to cause harm.

Cyberbullying is not a separate type of bullying, but a way in which some types of bullying can happen. For example, verbal bullying and relational bullying can happen online.

Bullying can happen as early as preschool, but bullying is most likely to happen during middle school. It can happen in many different settings—in classrooms, in school gyms and cafeterias, on school buses, and online.

THE LANDSCAPE OF BULLYING



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Bullying affects a large number of children and youth.

School-based bullying probably affects between 18 and 31 percent of children and youth, and cyberbullying probably affects about 7 to 15 percent of youth. Some young people are more likely to be bullied: youth with disabilities, obese youth, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth.

The harm caused by bullying can last a long time.

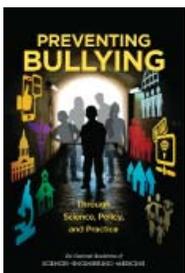
Bullying can have long-lasting effects on youth who are bullied, for youth who bully others, and for youth who witness bullying. These consequences include poor school performance, anxiety, depression, and future delinquent and aggressive behavior. The harmful results of being bullied can last into adulthood.

Bullying can have long-lasting consequences for those who are bullied:

- Children and youth who have been bullied can experience problems such as sleeping problems, headaches, stomachaches, and bedwetting.
- Psychological problems are also common after being bullied, and can include depression, anxiety, and especially for girls, self-harming behavior. Anger, aggression, use of alcohol, and conduct problems are common, especially for boys.
- Children and youth who have been bullied can suffer academic problems such as poor grades or test scores.
- The harmful consequences of being bullied can last into adulthood.
- Children and youth who both bully others and are bullied themselves are at even greater risk of experiencing harm as a result.
- Individuals who are bullied or who bully others—or both—are much more likely to consider or attempt suicide, compared to children who are not involved in bullying.

Bullying CAN Be Prevented.

Reducing the presence and impact of bullying will require many groups working together: families and schools, communities, health care workers, the media and social media, and federal and state governments and agencies.



www.nas.edu/ScienceOnBullying



What young people should know about bullying.

How young people act is influenced by the attitudes and behavior of their peers. Peer groups have influence over whether bullying happens. Some peer groups tolerate and even encourage bullying behavior, while others actively discourage it from happening. Having friends can protect a young person against being the target of bullying.

Young people who are present when bullying happens but who take no action—not helping either the bully or the target of bullying—are known as bystanders. It is relatively rare for bystanders to come to the aid of a student who is being bullied. But when bystanders do nothing, it can also send a message that bullying is acceptable.

What can young people do to prevent and reduce bullying?

Be aware that:

- bullying has harmful consequences for everyone involved in bullying behavior, not just students who are the targets of bullying.
- some children and youth are more likely to be bullied, including LGBT youth, youth with disabilities, and obese youth.

Young people can help prevent bullying in their schools. Youth should work with their school communities to

implement bullying-prevention programs that have been shown to be effective. The programs that appear to work best have a mix of activities for all students—such as using class time to discuss bullying—and additional help for the students at highest risk of being bullied.

Gay-straight alliances can help buffer LGBT youth against bullying. These alliances are usually student-led, school-based clubs that aim to improve the school climate for LGBT youth and educate the school community about LGBT issues.

Some strategies have NOT been shown to work.

- No tolerance policies, which suspend students for bullying, do not appear to be effective at stopping bullying or making schools safer. They may lead to increased academic and behavior problems for the young people involved.
- Encouraging youth to fight back when bullied may perpetuate the cycle of violence
- Some peer-led approaches—peer mediation, peer-led conflict resolution, forced apologies, and peer mentoring—may not be appropriate or effective at preventing bullying.
- Approaches that group youth who bully together may reinforce aggressive behavior and result in higher rates of bullying.
- Conflict resolution approaches, even when facilitated by adults, are not typically recommended in situations of bullying, because they suggest a disagreement between two peers of equal status or power, rather than an instance of peer abuse.
- There is little evidence that short-term events or brief assemblies to raise awareness—particularly those that focus on youth suicide—are effective at changing a climate of bullying or leading to lasting effects on bullying.



Federal Resources for Youth:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- Prevent Bullying
<http://www.cdc.gov/features/prevent-bullying/>

Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

- Bullying: Overview
<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/bullying/Pages/default.aspx>

Health Resources and Services Administration

- Bullying Prevention
<http://mchb.hrsa.gov/programs/bullying/>
- Children Safety Network; Bullying Prevention
<http://www.childrensafetynetwork.org/injury-topics/bullying-prevention>
- Bullying Prevention: 2015 Resource Guide
<http://www.childrensafetynetwork.org/sites/childrensafetynetwork.org/files/Bullying%20Prevention.pdf>
- Bullying Prevention Training
<http://www.stopbullying.gov/training>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

- Bullying Prevention
<http://www.samhsa.gov/tribal-ttac/resources/bullying-prevention>
- KnowBullying mobile app
<http://store.samhsa.gov/apps/knowbullying/index.html>

The Ad Council

- “Be More Than A Bystander”
<http://www.adcouncil.org/Our-Campaigns/Safety/Bullying-Prevention>

PACER.org

- PACER’s National Bullying Prevention Center
<http://www.pacer.org/bullying/>

United States Department of Education

- Creating a Safe and Respectful Environment on Our Nation’s School Buses
<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/creating-safe-and-respectful-environment-our-nations-school-buses-training-toolkit>
- Creating a Safe and Respectful Environment in Our Nation’s Classrooms
<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/creating-safe-and-respectful-environment-our-nations-classrooms-training-toolkit>
- Take Action Today: How Families and Students Can Take the Lead in Creating Safer School Environments
<http://www.stopbullying.gov/blog/2014/09/16/take-action-today-how-families-and-students-can-take-lead-creating-safer-school>

United States Department of Health and Human Services

[Stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov)

United States Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

- Bullying in Schools: An Overview
<http://www.ojjdp.gov/pubs/234205.pdf>