



Parents Make A Difference!

Teens and Bullying Behavior



If I asked you to think of a time when you may have been bullied, what might you remember? Perhaps somebody said something mean to you or gossiped about you. Maybe somebody or a group of people punched or kicked you or did something that made you feel badly about yourself.

In the 2015 Department of Public Instruction Youth Risk Behavior Survey of 5,309 youth in grades 7 through 12 in Southwest Wisconsin showed that 27% of 9th-12th graders reported they had been bullied on school property in the past year. 48% of 7th-8th graders reported they had been bullied at some time.

These statistics mirror a study from the 2010–2011 School Crime Supplement (National Center for Education Statistics and Bureau of Justice Statistics) that indicates that, nationwide, 28 percent of students in grades 6 to 12 experienced bullying.

Bullying behavior has probably existed since the beginning of human interaction, but it is not a normal, acceptable part of growing up. According to Dan Olweus, Swedish psychologist, bullying consists of 3 components including:

- 1) Unwanted, intentional physical or verbal **aggression** on the part of one or more persons toward another. This might include physically overpowering or hurting someone or repeatedly making threatening or humiliating remarks
- 2) A consistent pattern of behavior that is **repeated** over time. While a single incident can be harmful, one incident is not bullying behavior.
- 3) An **imbalance** of power or strength such as an older youth versus a younger one or someone stronger against a weaker one.

What is NOT bullying? Some bad behavior can be defined as "drama". Drama is... the everyday difficulties that all teenagers experience, including relationship rifts with friends or people teens are dating, onetime instances of classmates being jerks, and conflicts that eventually blow over.

Forty percent (40%) of 7th-12th graders in the YRBS survey agreed or strongly agreed that harassment and bullying is a problem at their school; 46% of females reported that, whereas only 34% of males reported that. However, 82% of the 7th-12th graders reported that they feel safe and secure at school

YRBS SURVEY

says:

27%

of 9th – 12th graders report they have been bullied on school property in the last 12 months.

48%

of 7th and 8th graders report they have been bullied at some time.

40%

of 7th - 12th graders agree or strongly agree that bullying and harassment by other students is a problem in their school. 46% of females report this and 34% of males.

10 %

of 9th – 12th graders report they bullied someone else at school in the last 12 months

82%

of 7th-12th graders report they most of the time or always feel safe and secure at school.

WHAT DOES A BYSTANDER DO?

A bystander just stands by, watching bullying behavior, and taking no real action. What are some ways bystanders can support someone who they see being bullied?

◇ Spend time with those who are being bullied at school, such as: talk to them, sit with them at lunch, and invite them to play sports or other games during free time.

◇ Listen to the person being bullied and let him or her talk about the event and his or her feelings about the situation.

◇ Tell the person being bullied that you don't like the bullying and ask if you can do anything to help.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

All teens are affected by bullying behavior. Here are suggestions for parents from Becky Mather, UW-Extension.

√ Set a Good Example for Your Teen

- Be tolerant and inclusive of a variety of people and personalities.
- Help your teen to be more inclusive and understanding. Encourage your teen to think of other's, particularly when someone is acting inappropriately or annoyingly.
- Don't allow your child to call others "gay," "retard," or any other slurs, even when he or she tells you "it's no big deal."

√ Help to create an environment that addresses bullying *before* it happens

- Teach your teen to be an ally, not a bystander. Help your teen learn how to

address bullying behavior when possible and to speak up for those who are at risk for bullying.

- Encourage your child to socialize with a diverse variety of friends.
- Be conscious that adults who interact with your teen and his or her peers are not always as aware as they should be of how their actions contribute to or prevent bullying.

√ Monitor technology in an effort to be aware if your child is heading for trouble

- Check to see if your teen is continuing to engage and view media, *even when they are experiencing cyberbullying*
- Discuss with your teen that he or she might be better off turning off the cell phone or e-mail.

√ Don't overreact or underreact

- Listen and stay calm
- Watch for non-verbal signs that your teen is struggling such as headaches or stomachaches, not wanting to be a part of activities he/she previously enjoyed, unexplained injuries or bruises, avoidance of school, a rapid drop in grades, or, even, suicidal thoughts or actions.
- Provide appropriate support. If it is bullying, your teen needs you and/or someone else in power to intercede and make a change in the relationship.
- Strategize and roleplay with your teen how to deal with the situation.

REMEMBER – PARENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Bullying is a serious threat to the well-being of your teen. It is very difficult as a parent to watch your teen get hurt. Just remember there are others out there who are experiencing similar issues and there are resources available. Your love and support makes a tremendous difference to your teen. (Myparenthetical.com)

Teens and Bullying Resources:

NoBullying.com has useful articles for teens, parents, teachers, and health professionals.

"A WORLD WITHOUT BULLYING: BRIGITTE'S STORY" <http://kidshealth.org/en/kids/stop-bullying.html?WT.ac=k-ra#>

BULLYING: WHAT CAN PARENTS DO? <http://myparenthetical.com/>

Bullying Special Edition, <http://www.education.com/topic/school-bullying-teasing/>

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