



How Much Do You Know About Bullying?

MYTH: People who bully are insecure and have low self-esteem.

Many people who bully are popular and have average or better-than-average self-esteem. They often take pride in their aggressive behavior and control over the people they bully. People who bully may be part of a group that thinks bullying is okay. Some people who bully may also have poor social skills and experience anxiety or depression. For them, bullying can be a way to gain social status.

MYTH: Bullying usually occurs when there are no other students around.

Students see about four out of every five bullying incidents at school. In fact, when they witness bullying, they give the student who is bullying positive attention or even join in about three-quarters of the time. Although 9 out of 10 students say there is bullying in their schools, adults rarely see bullying, even if they are looking for it.

MYTH: Only boys bully.

People think that physical bullying by boys is the most common form of bullying. However, verbal, social, and physical bullying happens among both boys and girls, especially as they grow older.

MYTH: Parents are usually aware that their children are bullying others.

Parents play a critical role in bullying prevention, but they often do not know if their children bully or are bullied by others. To help prevent bullying, parents need to talk with their children about what is happening at school and in the community.

MYTH: Bullying often resolves itself when you ignore it.

Bullying reflects an imbalance of power that happens again and again. Ignoring the bullying teaches students who bully that they can bully others without consequences. Adults and other students need to stand up for children who are bullied, and to ensure they are protected and safe.

MYTH: All children will outgrow bullying.

For some, bullying continues as they become older. Unless someone intervenes, the bullying will likely continue and, in some cases, grow into violence and other serious problems. Children who consistently bully others often continue their aggressive behavior through adolescence and into adulthood.

MYTH: Reporting bullying will make the situation worse.

Research shows that children who report bullying to an adult are less likely to experience bullying in the future. Adults should encourage children to help keep their school safe and to tell an adult when they see bullying.

MYTH: Teachers often intervene to stop bullying.

Adults often do not witness bullying despite their good intentions. Teachers intervene in only 14 percent of classroom bullying episodes and in 4 percent of bullying incidents that happen outside the classroom.

MYTH: Nothing can be done at schools to reduce bullying.

School initiatives to prevent and stop bullying have reduced bullying by 15 to 50 percent. The most successful initiatives involve the entire school community of teachers, staff, parents, students, and community members.

FACT: Spreading rumors is a form of bullying.

Spreading rumors, name-calling, excluding others, and embarrassing them are all forms of social bullying that can cause serious and lasting harm.

FACT: People who bully have power over those they bully.

People who bully others usually pick on those who have less social power (peer status), psychological power (know how to harm others), or physical power (size, strength). However, some people who bully also have been bullied by others. People who both bully and are bullied by others are at the highest risk for problems (such as depression and anxiety) and are more likely to become involved in risky or delinquent behavior.

Source: StopBullying.gov provides information from various government agencies on how kids, teens, young adults, parents, educators and others in the community can prevent or stop bullying. For more information, visit – www.stopbullying.gov