

Bullying - how to get help if you are being bullied - ReachOut.com



What can you do if you are experiencing bullying?

There are many different things you might be able to do if you are being bullied. Different strategies can work in different situations. You might try and work it out by yourself. However, if the bullying doesn't stop you might find it helpful to ask someone else for advice and help. Don't be afraid to let someone know that you are being bullied - they can help you.

Asking someone for advice and getting help to stop bullying

To stop bullying - be it verbal, written, or cyber bullying - it can be helpful to tell someone that you are being bullied. This may seem scary at first, however, telling someone can lighten your load and help you to work out how to solve the problem and stop being bullied.

Talking to someone is particularly important if you feel unsafe or frightened, or if you don't have many friends. Asking for help or talking to someone about the bullying is not being weak or 'giving in'. In fact it takes a lot of *strength* and *courage* to ask for help.

There are many people who might be able to help, including friends, older brothers and sisters, teachers, family, counsellors or parents. Teachers and counsellors are specially trained and it's their job to help stop bullying. In the workplace this could be a Human Resource (HR) manager or union representative.

For more information on how these people might help, check out the Who can help you ([../find/getting-help/who-can-help-you](#)) section.

Some tips for getting help

- It might be easier if you talk to someone you know well and trust; they will give you much needed support and will often have suggestions you hadn't considered for helping with the situation.
- You might feel more comfortable taking a friend with you. If you feel you might get too nervous to speak, write down what you'd like to say on paper or in an email.
- If you don't feel as if you are believed or taken seriously about the bullying, or if no action is taken, it doesn't mean that your feelings aren't valid or the bullying should continue. It's important you tell someone else and continue to do so until you are helped.
- Being bullied can be upsetting and stressful and can affect a range of different areas of your life, including self-esteem, relationships, work or study. You can find out more about how it might affect you in the Bullying - what it is ([../find/articles/bullying-what-it-is](#)) fact sheet.

How to help to work it out yourself - some tips

Depending on how bad the bullying is (and as long as you aren't feeling unsafe, frightened or physically threatened), you might decide to try and work it out yourself first. Try and remember that no matter how hard you try, the bully might not be willing to change their behaviour. This is when talking to someone else can be really helpful.

The following tips might be particularly helpful for verbal bullying:

When possible, ignore them (including mobile phone or email bullying)

Ignoring the bully may be helpful, particularly for one-off cases. Bullies are looking for a reaction from you and often lose interest if they aren't given the satisfaction of getting one.

Suggestions for ignoring the bully include:

- Walk away when the bully approaches you. Try and imagine it's a friend you're walking away from - this can be a way of making sure your body language (which you're usually unaware of) doesn't give away a sense of fear.
- It might help to concentrate on thinking about something else (Eg - Like what you'll do next weekend, counting to 100, or planning your homework)
- Have a saying or a statement that you can repeat in your head when the bully approaches you to block out a sense of fear.

Building a wall around you

It may be helpful to build an invisible wall around you by visualising it in your mind. When the wall is up - imagine that any verbal abuse then just bounces off the wall.

Use visualisation

Bullies can be pretty scary. Picturing them looking silly may help to make them less problematic for you. For example, picture the bully's head shrinking and their voice coming out all tiny and squeaky.

They are human - don't give them superpowers

All bullies are human - they all get up in the morning, eat breakfast, brush their teeth and do other normal things. They have fights with their parents, feel insecure, feel scared, feel worried, and aren't perfect. They may present themselves to the world as having no worries and can act really confident - but don't be fooled. They aren't superhuman - they may be just better at hiding what's really going on inside. In fact - often bullies act the way they do to make themselves feel better. They put other people down to make themselves feel more powerful.

Stay positive

It can be hard to remember all your good points when someone is doing their best to be negative. However, try to think of all the things you do well and that you are a valuable person. Thinking of how bad the bully must be feeling may also help you to stay positive.

Hang around other people

You may be safer if you stay in groups. If you are alone, try to identify people who may offer you safety.

Be confident

Bullies usually pick on people that they think are weaker than they are, so it may help if you stand up to them.

Some suggestions are:

- telling them to leave you alone may get a bully off your back
- turning around and being nice to them may throw them right off
- using humour may also throw the bully off track
- use positive self-talk - saying to yourself something like 'I know I am better than that, I'm not like that, I don't have to pick on other people to know that I am good'
- remember that your friends accept you for who you are.

Keep out of their way

It might be possible for you to avoid the bully. This can mean travelling a different way to school, or avoiding the places that they hang out. This is not giving in to bullying, but about looking after yourself and making sure you are happier and more comfortable.

Your rights

It might be helpful to remember that everyone has the right to live, work, study and play in an environment free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence. No one deserves or asks to be bullied.

More information about how to get help to stop bullying

For more information about bullying check out the fact sheets on the left side of the page.

Other things on Reach Out to check out are Reach Out Central ([../../../../find/articles/introduction-to-reach-out-central-the-game](#)) (ROC), an interactive online space, and the ROTreat forums Info Bus sessions, where you can talk about stuff and find some helpful ideas from our RO community on dealing with a range of issues.

- This content was created in Reach Out.
- Last updated 28 Jun 09

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