



Offline or Online, Bullying Hurts — Let's End it Together



When Bullying Follows You Home

Bullying remains a significant issue affecting youth nationwide, with both in-person and online forms causing serious harm. Stopbullying.gov reports that about **19% of students in grades 6-12 report being bullied**, with about **22% of those students being bullied online or by text**. As technology becomes more deeply integrated into youth's daily lives, cyberbullying has emerged as a particularly harmful form of bullying given its ability to reach people at all times and at any location.

Bullying & Substance Use

Youth who experience bullying are at an increased risk for depression, anxiety, poor academic outcomes and more likely to engage in risky behavior—including substance use. Youth who experience both school bullying and cyberbullying had an increased risk of using alcohol, marijuana or tobacco products or misusing prescription drugs to cope than those who do not experience bullying. Adolescents involved in any form of bullying increased their rate for risky consumption by three or more times.

What Can You Do to Help End Bullying?

Ending bullying isn't a one-person job—it takes everyone. One of the most important things you can do to combat bullying is to **Be an Upstander!** An upstander is a person who speaks up when they witness bullying situations, whether that be stepping in to support a peer or getting help from a trusted adult. There is power in bystander intervention—57% of bullying situations stop when a peer intervenes on behalf of the youth being bullied.

Other Ways to Help End Bullying

Helping as a Friend, Peer, Parent or Adult

- **Listen without Judgment** – Be someone they feel comfortable sharing their experiences with.
- **Encourage Empathy and Respect** – Use books, media and conversations to build compassion.
- **Raise Awareness** – Whether in the school, workplace or community, raise awareness about the impacts of bullying as well as the risks of early substance use.
- **Support Bullying Prevention** – Promote anti-bullying programs and peer support systems.
- **Create Safe Spaces** – Offer environments where youth feel seen, supported and safe to discuss their struggles without fear of stigma, judgment or ridicule.
- **Be a Positive Role Model** – The behaviors we model for young people are important and impact their development—including bullying and substance use. Positive parenting styles are associated with increased empathy in young people and negative styles are associated with higher rates of bullying and substance use.
- **Parent Involvement** – Talk to your children about emotional health and substance use.

Helping Yourself

- **Think Before You Post** – Never share anything online that you wouldn't want your teachers, family or future employers to see. Once something is online, it can be very difficult to remove.
- **Protect Personal Information** – Be cautious about sharing details like your location, school or telephone number.
- **Report and Block Bullies** – Most platforms allow you to report abusive behavior and block the user. Don't hesitate to use these tools.
- **Talk to a Trusted Adult** – Reach out to someone you trust and tell them what's going on—they can help.

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