

Be Aware of Bullying Behaviors



Any adult can intervene on bullying behavior. In fact, all adults in any given community need to take responsibility for interrupting bullying behavior. It's up to each of us to make our schools and communities safe places that nurture learning and growth.

Being able to recognize bullying behavior is the first step toward stopping it.

Bullying is:

- Avoiding or excluding someone due to age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, disability or other reasons.
- Using verbal insults or degrading remarks.
- Offensive physical contact or unwanted touching.
- Making unwelcome or offensive jokes about personal characteristics.
- Making phone calls, e-mail messages, letters or messages of any kind that are threatening or offensive.
- Sexual or racial banter (joking around); crude conversation and innuendo (implying one thing by saying another).

5 Ways to Prevent Kids from Bullying

We focus a great deal - and rightly so - on the victims of bullying. But adults can help bullies, too, by helping the child face the reality of his/her behavior and taking responsibility for it.



In his book, *How to Talk to Your Kids about School Violence* (<http://howtotalktoyourkids.com>), Ken Druck, PhD, provides a list of ways adults can intervene with a young person who is bullying.



Get the facts. If the child won't tell you about his/her behavior, talk to other parents, teachers and possibly the victim and/or the victim's parents.



The child should apologize to his victim and undo any damage to the extent it's possible. For example, if the child damaged another child's belongings, (s)he should replace the damaged items.



Help the young person understand that physical, verbal, written and/or emotional abuse of another person is never acceptable.



If the young person hangs out with other bullies, separate him/her from that group. Parents can drive the young person to and from school (to avoid "hanging" time) and involve the young person in constructive after-school activities that challenge the young person. In elementary grades, teachers can separate children in the classroom and designate "play buddies" for recess time (to reduce the vulnerability of a lone child).

Let the child talk about the fears and insecurities that might be causing him to act like a bully. Make an action plan to address those problems, such as going for counseling or taking an anger management or anti-bullying class.