

# Helping your child cope with bullying: Tips for parents

## What is bullying:

- Deliberate hurtful behaviours that cause harm, fear, or distress
- Behaviours are repeated by one or more individuals
- There is often a real or perceived power imbalance

## Types of bullying:



**Physical:** Hitting, shoving, damaging or stealing property



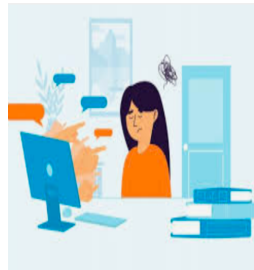
**Verbal:** Mocking, teasing, name calling, racist or sexist remarks, threats and intimidation



**Relational:** Humiliating actions or comments, spreading gossip/rumors, excluding others from group activities



**Electronic:** Spreading rumors or making hurtful/aggressive comments through instant messages, social media, or email



## Electronic/Cyberbullying:

- Especially problematic because torment and humiliation can have a much larger audience compared to traditional bullying at school
- Children are unable to escape the bullying, as online platforms and electronic devices are often accessible at home, school, etc.

## Statistics on bullying:

- Prevalence rates: between 10–33% of children report experiencing bullying
- 1 in 3 students in Canada have reported being bullied
- 1 in 10 adults report that a child in their household experienced cyberbullying
- Girls are more likely to be bullied on the internet compared to boys
- 16.5% of parents never or rarely speak to children about cyberbullying

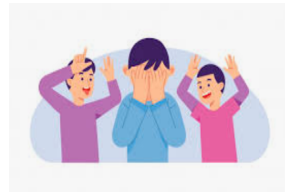


## Effects of bullying on children:



### Mental health difficulties

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Suicidal thoughts/behaviours
- Physical symptoms induced by emotions



### Academic difficulties

- Disliking school
- More missed days of school
- Lower grades



### Social difficulties

- Social withdrawal/isolation from existing friends
- Lower social status and greater marginalization
- Poor social adjustment
- Loneliness

- Multiple types of bullying increases negative outcomes for children
- Negative outcomes of bullying in childhood often continue into adulthood

## Effects of bullying on parents:

- Anger that their child is experiencing distress
- Helplessness for improving the situation
- Feeling unprepared for how to help their child cope
- Guilt regarding what they could have done to prevent the bullying
- Frustration from a perceived lack of response from the school

## Reasons children don't tell adults about bullying:

- Shame and embarrassment of seeming like a victim
- Fear of getting in trouble



- Fear that telling an adult will make the situation worse

- Fear parents will increase restrictions on their internet access

## Signs your child is being bullied:

### Physical signs

- Unexplained bruises or scrapes
- Somatic symptoms (headaches, stomach aches)
- Sleep/eating difficulties

### Emotional signs

- Irritability
- Low mood
- Avoiding social interactions
- Low self-esteem

### School-related signs

- Negative attitudes towards school
- Tries to avoid school or bus
- Coming home with missing items/money

### Cyber-related signs

- Changes in social media habits
- Noting that they blocked people
- Seeming upset after technology use

## Strategies to help your child cope with a bullying:



### Communicate with your child:

- Validate feelings
- Gather information
- Instill hope

You are not alone

It's not your fault

Thank you for speaking up

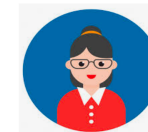
You deserve to be treated with respect

You have a right to feel safe at school



### Provide strategies that your child could use for dealing with the bully:

- Tell an adult
- Stay calm and minimize reactions near the bully
- Don't bully back



### Get others involved:

- Inform the teacher or school principal
- Consider having your child see a mental health professional if their well-being is impacted



### Promote prosocial behaviours:

- Ensure your child has other social supports
- Provide social skills training for making new friends to build self-esteem
- Get your child involved in activities or organizations to meet new children
- Maintain a positive home environment

## Resources:

Beane, A. L. (2008). Protect your child from bullying: Expert advice to help you recognize, prevent, and stop bullying before your child gets hurt. John Wiley & Sons.  
 Government of Ontario: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/bullying-we-can-all-help-stop-it>  
 Kids Help Phone Line: 1-800-668-6868; [www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)