

# Bullying Stinks

## What Is a Bully?

Consequences of Being Bullied

## Who Bullies Target

## What You Can Do

What if You're the Bully?



Special Section: **Cyberbullying!**  
What to do when bullies go viral.



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# Not Harmless Fun Not fun at all!



Every day millions of teens wake up with a problem. They are afraid to go to school because they're being bullied. Some people think that bullying is just a part of growing up and that it's harmless but this is not true. In addition to the psychological damage, bullying can cause some victims to actually hurt themselves.

Chances are you've had an experience with bullying. Being left out of social activities, hitting, pushing, teasing, name-calling, threatening and vandalizing personal possessions are all forms of bullying. Spreading rumors and saying mean things in email, text messages, on blogs or anywhere online is bullying too. That's called cyberbullying.

At its heart, bullying is when a person (or group) has power over someone else and hurts him or her on purpose. No matter what form it comes in, bullying is hurtful and wrong—

**REALLY WRONG.**



**47% of  
teens report  
that they have  
been a victim  
of bullying or  
cyberbullying.**



# So What is a Bully Anyway?

Bullies come in all shapes and sizes. Some are older, some are younger, big and small, rich and poor, popular and unpopular, male and female. You can't figure out who's a bully just by looking at them. It's the person's actions that make them a bully. People who are bullies want power and control over other kids, and they want you to believe that they have it.



## Why do bullies do it?

There are lots of reasons why teens become bullies. Sometimes they feel bad about themselves (insecure) and it makes them feel better by making someone else feel worse. Or, they feel really good about themselves. They believe that they are better than everyone else and that it's okay for them to lash out at others. Some bullies act the way they do because they have been bullied in the past—a learned behavior of abuse.

## Consequences of Being Bullied

Bullying makes people feel terrible. It causes victims to live in fear. They're afraid to go to school... afraid to ride the bus... afraid to walk home... afraid to use the bathroom. The pain and hurt caused by bullying can be so great that some people have even taken their own lives.

Over the long-term, bullying victims may experience: fear, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, loneliness, physical illness and suicidal thoughts.

Bullying also has negative effects on the bullies themselves. 60% of boys who were bullies in middle school have at least one criminal conviction by the age of 24.



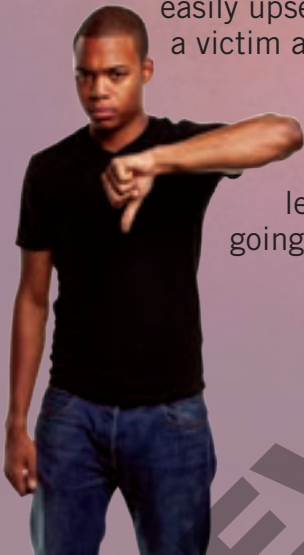
# Who do Bullies Target?

While anyone can be the target of a bully, there are some common traits among victims.

**Different:** Hair color, race, a disability, accent, clothing... anything that makes the victim stand out. Bullies look for kids who are different in some way and key in on those differences.

**Vulnerable:** Kids who are lonely, scared or easily upset are often victims of bullying. The more helpless a victim appears, the more powerful a bully feels.

**Isolated and Alone:** Bullies tend to target victims who are frequently alone. Being by yourself makes you easier to bully and makes it less likely that others will know that the bullying is going on.



No matter who, what, when, where, how or why—  
**No one deserves to be bullied.**

How not to be a target for bullies:

Don't draw attention to yourself.

Avoid places where bullies hang out.

Have a strong sense of self.

Be a good friend and develop meaningful relationships.

Look for allies that have the same feelings about bullying that you do.

# Being Bullied? What Can You Do?

Bullying hurts. But it's important that you know that you are not alone and it's not your fault. What you need to do is focus on ways you can make the bullying stop.

**Here are some strategies.**

## Be confident.

Hold your head up high. Remember that bullies pick on easy target that they think are weak. When you act confidently you're less likely to be a victim.

**Ignore them.** Bullies want to get a reaction from their victims. If you don't respond, you've taken away their "power." Ignore them and walk away or delete hurtful email and text messages. Eventually the bully will see that you don't care and go looking for an easier target.

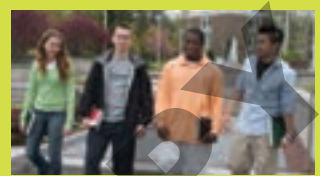
**Don't get angry.** Just remember that the bully wants a response from you. When you don't give them one, they have nothing to feed off of. If you stay in control, the bully won't be.

**Don't fight.** No matter which method you choose to deal with a bully, never resort to physical violence. You don't know how the bully will respond. You're also a lot more likely to be hurt and you might wind up in trouble.

**Use humor.** If a bully is verbally attacking you, try using humor to deflect it. For example, if someone teases you for being short, say "that just makes it easier to tie my shoes." Then calmly walk away.

**Talk!** The best way to deal with a bully is to talk about it with adults you can trust. Talk to a teacher, your parents, guidance counselor or coach. They can help you deal with the fears and frustrations, as well as help to make the bullying stop. When you report a bully you're not a "tattle-tale"...it's the right thing to do.

**1/3 of teens have reported being bullied at school.**

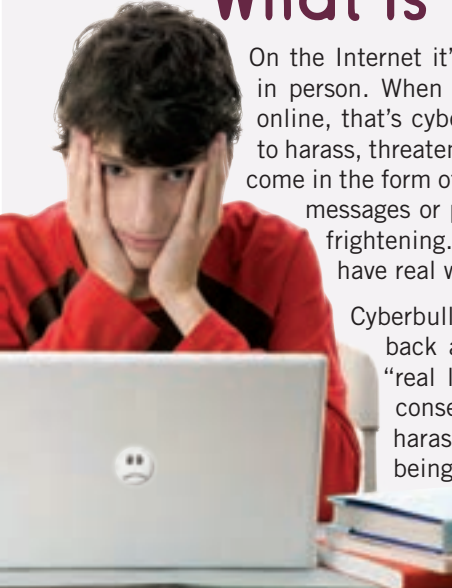


## Stick together.

Bullies look for kids who are alone. When you're with a group of friends a bully is more likely to leave you alone. If you have to go somewhere and you're worried about a bully, ask a friend to come along. If someone is spreading rumors about you, get your friends to help you set the record straight.



# What is Cyberbullying?



On the Internet it's easier to say mean things about people than it is in person. When someone sends you a cruel or bullying message online, that's cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is the use of technology to harass, threaten, embarrass or target someone. Cyberbullying may come in the form of chats, texts, IMs, emails, or posts. These types of messages or posts can be frustrating, irritating and sometimes frightening. Many times, the cyberbullying is illegal and can have real world consequence for those who do it.

Cyberbullying may seem like a safe, harmless way to get back at someone. After all, it's anonymous. It's not "real life." This is not true. Cyberbullying has real world consequences. If you use the Internet or a phone to insult, harass or stalk someone, you are hurting them. If you are being cyberbullied, don't do anything drastic.

**There are ways out.**  
**You are not alone.**

## How to deal with a cyberbully

- Block 'Em.** Many devices, programs and interactive sites allow you to block unwanted messages from cyberbullies.
- Ignore It.** Just like you'd walk away from a bully in person, you can walk away from a cyberbully too. Just close the window, shut down the program or turn off the computer (or phone). Ignoring a bully takes away his or her power, and may make the bullying stop.
- Tell Someone.** Don't suffer in silence. Talk to an adult you trust, like a parent, teacher or law enforcement officer. A trusted adult can help you deal with the cyberbully and figure out ways to make it stop.
- Save the Evidence.** When you're the victim of cyberbullying, you should save the texts, emails and IMs. This evidence will help you prove your case and is an important tool to make the cyberbully stop.

If someone is bullying someone else online, don't be a bystander. Talk to your friend about why they are saying mean things about someone else. Take a stand. Let the person know that bullying is not funny or cool, and explain to them that cyberbullying can have serious consequences. If you take the high road and stand up for what's right, chances are they'll stop.



The easiest way to prevent cyberbullying is to  
**be safe on the Internet.**



- Don't share personal information.
- Protect your passwords.
- Review your privacy settings.
- Ignore messages from unknown senders.

## WHAT IF I'm THE BULLY?

If you've ever been mean or threatening to someone—stop. You need to think about how your actions make other people feel. It's not okay to make people feel scared or lonely. Bullying is bad for everyone. Even though you think you're more powerful when you bully someone else, in actuality you're not. Attacking someone because they are different or "weaker" than you is not a sign of strength—but true weakness. Even though people may be afraid of a bully, it's certain that they don't respect a bully. True respect comes from being considerate of others and treating them the way you would want to be treated.



## STOP BULLYING!

If you see someone being bullied, do what you can to stop it. Don't just sit on the sidelines. Don't be a bystander. Stand up for the victim. Speak up for what is right. If we all stand together,  
**THE BULLYING WILL STOP.**



**Looking for more information? Check out these Internet sites for tips on dealing with bullying and cyberbullying:**

**Stop Bullying Now!**

<http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov>

**Kids Against Bullying**

<http://www.pacerkidsagainstabullying.org/>

**Teens Against Bullying**

<http://www.pacerteensagainstabullying.org>

**Dealing with Bullies.**

[http://kidshealth.org/kid/grow/school\\_stuff/bullies.html](http://kidshealth.org/kid/grow/school_stuff/bullies.html)

**Stop Cyberbullying**

<http://www.stopcyberbullying.org>

**Facts and Research on Cyberbullying**

<http://www.cyberbullying.us>