

Hurt that Keeps on Hurting

Adults often write off bullying as a harmless part of growing up. They're wrong.

Bullying often spells long-term problems for both bullies and victims. It's one of the reasons students think schools are more dangerous than they really are. It's also a common thread in a number of school shootings.

Bullying happens all over the world. It always involves:

- Mean or vicious behavior, repeated over time.
- A stronger bully preying on a weaker victim.

vicious

Researchers have found that bullying affects about 30 percent of teens and preteens, either as victims, bullies or both. Taken as a group, they paint a grim picture of bullying's long-term effects:

- Victims often suffer depression, anxiety and low self-esteem into adulthood.
- In extreme cases, bullying has driven victims to suicide.
- About 60 percent of bullies have at least one criminal conviction by age 24. Forty percent have three or more convictions.

More About Bullying

www.intheknowzone.com/bullying



Bullying Myths

According to one myth, bullies torture other kids to make up for their own insecurities. In fact, researchers have found that some bullies have an inflated sense of self worth, which can make them feel like they have the right to push people around.

Another false assumption is that bullies pick on victims who are physically weak. Instead, studies found that bullies are most likely to go after kids with few or no friends.

While people tend to associate physical bullying with boys, girls can be both bullies and victims.



For More Information

Go to www.intheknowzone.com for more information about bullying, with citations and links. Test your understanding with a quick quiz.



Don't stay in the dark.
Get In the Know!

Bullying

*it's not just kids
being kids*



In the know

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Bullying Realities

Otherwise, bullies generally tend to be about what you'd expect:

- They have a need to dominate others.
- They are often aggressive toward adults.
- They are quick-tempered, impulsive and intolerant of frustration.
- They tend to be coldhearted and unfeeling toward their victims.
- They find it difficult to follow rules.
- They are good at talking themselves out of getting in trouble.
- They tend to have a favorable view of violence.

Victims fall into two general categories:

- **Passive/submissive victims** are unassertive, careful, sensitive, and often smaller and weaker than their classmates. Most significantly, they have few friends.
- **Provocative victims** make up 10 to 20 percent of bullying targets. They tend to be quick-tempered, restless, clumsy, immature, and disruptive. Because of their irritating behavior, they are often disliked. Provocative victims are frequently bullies themselves, picking on more vulnerable kids.

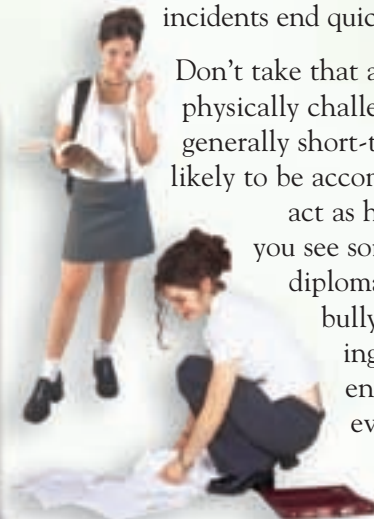


How It Works

Bullying involves isolation, humiliation and persecution. Eighty-five percent of bullying occurs in front of people. By publicly dominating the victim and demonstrating his lack of social support, the bully establishes a "right" to torture him. Once that happens, it reduces the chance that anyone will step forward to help the victim.

Perhaps because the bully senses that most onlookers don't like what he's doing, bullies can pretty easily be stopped in the act. If just one person speaks up for the victim, most incidents end quickly.

Don't take that as a recommendation to physically challenge a bully. Bullies are generally short-tempered, mean and likely to be accompanied by friends who act as henchmen. However, if you see someone being bullied, diplomatically urging the bully to "cool it" and leading the victim away may end the incident. But even that approach can be risky. It's best to find an adult to step in.



Don't Be Part of the Problem

Eighty to 90 percent of students say that watching bullying makes them uncomfortable. However, 54 percent admit they reinforce the bully by passively watching, and 21 percent of the remainder say they actively participate. Only one student in four tries to help the victim.

Since the bully needs an audience, watching is almost as bad as joining in. If you see a bullying incident, walk away and find an adult to break it up.

And no, that doesn't make you a nark. Caring enough to look out for someone else takes guts, and it's the right thing to do.

humiliation



More About Staying Safe

www.intheknowzone.com/bullying/staysafe



How to Avoid Being Bullied

- **Stay away from bullies.** You probably know who they are, so steer clear of them. If you're new to the school, ask around about places you should avoid.
- **There's safety in numbers.** Walk to school with other people. Carpool! Avoid being alone in hallways, restrooms or empty classrooms.
- **If you have it, don't flaunt it.** Never bring expensive possessions or large amounts of money to school. Bullies also pick on people they can take things from.
- **Don't act like a victim.** Predators become highly skilled at spotting weak members of the herd. If you walk with confidence—head tall, shoulders back—you're less likely to be singled out.
- **Walk away.** It won't always work, but it should be your first line of defense. It's not being a coward. It's being smart.

Two things you should never do:

1. Don't confront the bully head-on. Typically, he's cunning. He'll have it worked out so that any confrontation will end with you on the losing side or in trouble.
2. Don't carry a weapon, period! It's illegal, and it could increase the level of violence.

