

SIGNS YOUR CHILD IS BEING BULLIED & WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT: CHECKLIST

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Bullying is an intentional, aggressive and repeated behaviour that involves an imbalance of power or strength.

It's NEVER acceptable & NEVER ignore it.

It can take several forms:

- Physical (hitting, punching, beating)
- Verbal (teasing, name calling, threats)
- Emotional (intimidation using gestures, social exclusion, threats)
- Sexual
- Racist Bullying
- Cyberbullying (Online harassment, hate messages, threats, impersonation, and other digital abuse)
- Hazing (initiation ceremonies refers to the practice of rituals, challenges, and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group.)

Warning Signs:

- Your child comes home with torn, damaged, or missing pieces of clothing, books, or other belongings
- Has unexplained cuts, bruises, and scratches
- Has few, if any friends, with whom he or she spends time
- Seems afraid of going to school, walking to and from school, going on the bus or train or taking part in organised activities with their peers
- Finds or makes up excuses as to why they can't go to school
- Takes a long, out of the way, route when walking to or from school
- Has lost interest in school work or suddenly begins to do poorly in school
- Appears sad, moody, teary, or depressed when he or she comes home
- Complains frequently of headaches, stomach-aches or other physical ailments
- Has trouble sleeping or has frequent bad dreams
- Experiences a loss of appetite
- Appears anxious and suffers from low self-esteem

Note: Children with disabilities may be at a higher risk of being bullied than other children.

What to do if you suspect your child is a victim of bullying

- The above signs are signs of bullying but are also signs of other abuse as well. If your child displays any of these signs talk with them and talk with their school staff to learn more about what's going on. Never do nothing about it. It won't go away, and may get worse.
- When talking with your child, don't just ask if they're being bullied. A better way to approach it is to say:

"I've heard a lot about bullying in the news. Is that going on at your school?"

"I'm worried about you. Are there any kids at school who may be picking on you or bullying you?"

"Are there any kids at school who tease you in a mean way?"

"Are there any kids at school who leave you out or exclude you on purpose?"

More subtle questions:

"How's it going at school. Do you have any special friends this year? Who are they? "Who do you hang out with at break time?"

"Who do you sit with at lunch and on the bus?"

"Are there any kids at school who you really don't like? Why don't you like them? Do they ever pick on you or leave you out of things?"

- If your child or teenager is being bullied, try not to over-react. Assure them that you love them that this is NOT their fault and you will help them. Let them know they can talk to you about anything.
- Talk with your child's school. Don't just rush in all guns blazing. Make an appointment to talk with their teacher. Teachers are likely in the best position to understand the relationships between your child and other peers in their school.

- Share your concerns about your child and ask the teacher such questions as:
 “How does my child get along with the other kids in the class?”
 “Who does my child spend free time with & hang out with?”
 “Have you noticed or have you ever suspected that my child is being bullied by other kids?”
 Offer some examples of some ways that kids and teens are bullied so the teacher fully understands that you’re not focused on one form of bullying
- Ask your child’s teacher to talk with other staff & learning assistants, who interact with your child at school, to see whether they have observed your child being bullied by his or her peers
- If you are not comfortable talking with your child’s teacher, or not satisfied with the conversation, make an appointment to meet with your child’s Tutor or Head teacher to discuss your concerns
- If you believe your child is being bullied take quick action as bullying can have serious effects on your child or teenager
- If, after talking with your child and their school & you don’t feel that your child is being bullied, stay alert to other possible problems that your child may be experiencing that could cause depression, social isolation, or loss of interest in school and talk to your doctor or other health professional.

Tips for Overcoming Bullying – 10 Things to ‘Talk & Teach’ Your Child

1. Understand the bullying

Bullying is a learnt behaviour. There are several reasons why people bully others; more often than not, bullying can be a coping mechanism for people who are going through a stressful situation and it may be learnt from abuse or prejudice-based attitudes at home. Often people who bully are currently or have at some point been bullied themselves. Other reasons for bullying include jealousy and insecurity.

If you are being bullied, please do not stay a victim, understand that you are NOT the problem. Please speak up about it.

2. Never go through it in silence

When you're going through a stressful or difficult situation, it can clog your mind and fog your vision. This leads to people becoming distracted, stressed and unproductive. Bullying is something that affects the majority of people but alarmingly, we find that 45% of those who experience it fail to report it through embarrassment, fear or a lack of faith in support systems. It is incredibly important that you go through the appropriate reporting channels by firstly telling a teacher/parent/guardian/learning mentor or another responsible adult. If that doesn't work, please contact us for tailored advice. Even if you don't want to report it, speak to somebody and don't feel like you have to go through it alone because you don't.

3. Don't see yourself as the problem

The reason people experience bullying is not because of their sexuality, gender identity, race, appearance, body size, hair colour or disability or any other unique factor. The person who is bullying you is the one with the issue, not you.

4. Even though you may want to, don't isolate yourself

Depriving yourself from any sort of support certainly isn't going to resolve the issue. We know it may feel like the best thing to do at the time, but it will only make things worse by silencing you and reducing your self-esteem. Often people who are bullied slip into a victim status and see themselves as victims. It's important that you look beyond that and don't let the bullying dictate who you are. Talk about it, even if it's to somebody at Ditch the Label.

5. Deal with stress

When you are going through a stressful situation, it can be difficult to deal with it objectively if you keep it all to yourself. The stress navigates towards the front of your mind and builds up into a completely avoidable chain of negative emotions. It is therefore incredibly important to tell somebody that you trust; it doesn't even have to be an adult, it could be a friend or somebody at Ditch the Label.

We have a really simple exercise available on our website called Stress Reprogramming which you can do either alone or with somebody else in around 30 minutes. The exercise will help you see stress differently and come up with a way forward.

6. Seek role models

When you're going through your teen years, sometimes it can all seem like a bit of a black hole. It's made even worse if you're struggling with your identity or being bullied. This is why it is important to seek our positive role models to show you that plenty of people have been where you are right now and have managed to overcome it. For celebrity stories, click [here](#). For other stories and inspiring blogs, click [here](#).

7. It is a crime

Did you know that bullying is a criminal offence? It is up to you to decide upon how serious you perceive the bullying, but if somebody physically or sexually attacks you, uses prejudice language towards you (such as homohate and racism) or shares your private information or images online – these are all key signs that you should probably report it to the Police.

8. If you feel safe enough: speak to the person who is bullying you

Have you ever said something to a friend and upset them by accident? Chances are, it has probably happened lots of times unintentionally. It's a similar thing with bullying as the definition, by default is subjective – meaning that everybody has a different threshold of what they consider to be bullying. But bullying is usually consistent, deliberate and more than just a misunderstanding.

Sometimes, the person who is bullying you may genuinely have no idea that it is affecting you. Equally, they are probably going through a difficult time themselves and will relate to how you're feeling. This is why we have found that speaking to the person who is bullying you can be really effective.

9. Look after your health

We're not going to go into the whole endorphin thing because you've probably heard it before – but seriously, eating a good, clean diet and working out can really improve your physical and mental health and reduce stress. Reductions in stress increase your clarity and break down difficult situations, making them much easier to deal with. Other things you can try include meditation, yoga, cooking, running and swimming. We ALL have mental health, but why is it that everybody focuses more heavily on physical than mental? The fact of the matter is: we all have ups and downs and statistically 1 in 4 of us will experience some sort of mental health complication such as depression or anxiety. It is completely fine and okay to speak up about these issues and it is important that you seek emotional and mental health support from your GP, a therapist or counsellor. We have more advice available here.

10. Lean on The Experts

Your child can call Childline run by the NSPCC on 0800 1111 or find out more about bullying here

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/>

Ditch The Label are one of the UK's largest anti-bullying charities and they are always there for your teenager. If they need any help or someone to talk to they can go anonymously to <https://www.ditchthelabel.org/>

I run 'Confidence Classes for Children' to build confidence, resilience and self-esteem either to prevent your child from being bullying, or to help them recover from being bullied.

[LINK TO NEW PAGE ON MY NEW WEBSITE to book on.](#)



