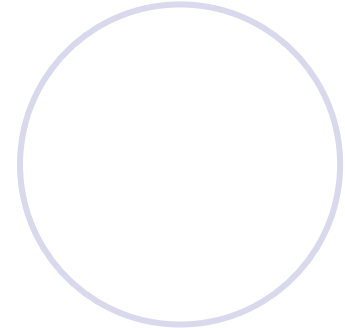
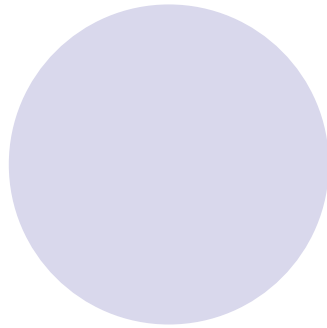
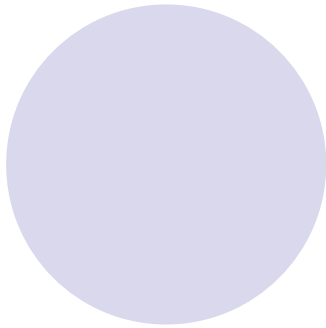


# Bullying in Middle School: What Is it and How Can We Help to Identify it and Stop it?





# What is Bullying?

- Bullying is an aggressive behavior that involves a *conscious, willful and deliberately hostile act* that is intended to harm, involves an imbalance of power and strength and that *may occur repeatedly over time*.



# What is Bullying?

- Bullying can take many different forms:
  - physical (hitting, punching, kicking, etc.)
  - verbal (threats, name calling, put downs, gossip)
  - non verbal (social exclusion, intimidation, “dirty looks”)
- Bullying can occur in person or through electronic form (cyber bullying).

# How Can You Tell If Your Child Is Being Bullied?

- Possible warning signs that your child is being bullied may include:
  - 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, riding the school bus, or taking part in organized activities with peers (such as clubs)
  - Takes a long, “illogical” route when walking to or from school

# Warning Signs (Continued):

- 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, stomachaches, 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

**\*\*Be aware that your child may not tell you if he or she is being bullied. Talk to them and make sure they know you want them to tell you if they believe they are bullied\*\***

# What To Do If You Believe Your Child Is Being Bullied

- 1: Talk to them. Use direct and indirect questions such as:
  - “Are there any kids who are picking on you/excluding you at school?”
  - “Who are your friends at school?”
  - “Who do you sit with at lunch/on the bus?”
  - “Are there any kids who you don’t like? Why?”

# What To Do If You Believe Your Child Is Being Bullied

- 2: Talk to us
  - Bullying is not ok—we work hard to stop it from happening at all, but are not always aware of problems that occur—give us as much information as you can so that we can help.
  - Who to talk to:
    - School Counselor/School Psychologist
    - Principal
    - Your child's Teachers

# What To Do If You Believe Your Child Is Being Bullied

- Encourage your child to talk to us (the school)
  - Unfortunately, bullying can often occur in places where teachers and other staff cannot directly see it. Alerting us to the problem can help us better identify it and address it with the bully.
  - This also provides us with an opportunity to reinforce with your child what he or she can do to respond to and/or avoid bullies in the future.
  - Reinforce with your child that letting an adult know that he or she is being bullied is *not* tattling!



# What Can My Child Do If He Or She Is Bullied?

- Use assertiveness skills to tell the bully to stop (e.g. “I don’t like it when you threaten me/make fun of me/give me dirty looks, and you need to stop.”)
- Tell an adult!!
- Ignore the bully.
- Respond with humor, as long as it does not encourage the bully to continue.
- Agree with the bully (e.g. if they’re making fun of your glasses, something obvious, thank them for noticing.)
- Give a quick comeback such as “Huh?”, “What?” or anything unexpected than can throw the bully off.
- Walk or run away, especially if the situation is unsafe.
- Hang out with people who can be trusted, especially in places where bullying might occur (hallways, cafeteria, etc.)



# Cyberbullying

- Cyberbullying, unlike other forms of bullying, occurs outside of school, and can be more difficult for some kids to escape.
- It involves using technology (cell phones, email, IM, social networks, etc) in order to bully someone.
- It may include posting rude or false information about someone, calling someone names, sending threatening messages, or excluding someone from an online group.
- According to the Stop Bully Now Campaign, 1 in 4 middle school students are cyber bullied each month.

# How To Prevent And Respond To Cyberbullying

- Parents: Be aware of your child's activities online, and talk to them about what to do if they are cyberbullied.
- Kids: Do not respond to the cyberbully!!
  - Block them from your social networking sites, IM, etc.
  - Save all messages, etc. as evidence of bullying.
- Report inappropriate messages to the company that runs the chat room, web site, etc., or to the police if necessary.

# How To Prevent And Respond To Cyberbullying

- If messages are sent via text to a phone, file a complaint with your cell phone company.
- Notify us that cyberbullying is occurring so that we can address it if the bullying also begins to occur at school.