

What everyone needs to know about bullying

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Hi everyone. My name is Tina and I'm a mental health professional. Today let's talk about bullying, what it is, what it does and how we all can make a difference.

What is bullying?

Bullying is defined as an unwanted, aggressive behavior involving a perceived power imbalance and is usually repeated or has the potential to be repeated over time, usually includes physical strength, access to embarrassing information, status or popularity, to control or harm others. It can include making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically, verbally, on the phone or online, or excluding someone from a group, and often involves groups of individuals who support each other in bullying others.

When and where does bullying occur?

Bullying, unfortunately, can occur anywhere and everywhere at any time, at any age and in any setting, in schools, in the workplace, at home, on the phone or online. In today's society we have a 24/7 platform for communication via social media which can foster ground breaking innovation but can also lead some to expose inescapable exposure and victimization.

Who is at risk?

There's not a single profile of people involved in bullying. Those at greatest risk of being bullied can be anyone who's perceived as being different, weaker, having a disability and particularly those who identify as LGBTQ. People who bully can either be well connected socially or marginalized and may be bullied by others themselves.

For bullying in adults, this can occur in the workplace, in social situations or online, with statistics reported of more than 40% of workers in the U.S. thought to have been bullied in the workplace. 27% say they've witnessed workplace bullying. Bullying in the workplace usually comes from someone who's in a position of authority. And for cyber bullying, or bullying online, the best things

that you can do are to ignore it. Block the person from your profile. Keep a record of what they're saying, taking screen shots and report it to the authorities.

Bullying in children and teens

Now let's turn our attention to children and teens. A lot of research has been done on this topic using surveys at schools across the country. From those many surveys we have found that 21% of students who are age 12 to 18 report some form of bullying in a given year. Most of those who've experienced bullying were female, but after that the demographic is split evenly across ages, location across the country and across ethnicities. 6% have missed school on at least one day out of a month because they felt unsafe and one in three teens have reported experiencing online harassment. Approximately 30% of young people admit to bullying others and when bystanders intervene bullying stops within 10 seconds 57% of the time.

The impact of bullying

Bullying effects everyone it touches, from the person who's the victim of the behavior, the person who is doing the bullying, everyone present at the time and it extends to family and friends that are impacted by bullying in a deleterious way. Children and teen's experience with bullying can lead to worsening feelings of isolation, rejection, exclusion, despair, depression, anxiety, it has the potential to lead to suicidal thinking or actions. The vast majority of those bullied do not become suicidal thanks to social and family supports, a resilient nature, or lack of other risk factors. LGBTQ youth though, are at increased risk for suicide attempts even when bullying is not a factor making them particularly vulnerable to the impact of bullying.

Warning signs to watch for

Some signs of bullying to watch for. If your child is coming home hurt or with damaged or missing belongings, they're having trouble sleeping or sleeping all of the time, maybe avoiding certain places, school or other activities, or they might appear sad, angry, moody, anxious, withdrawn or depressed. They might feel helpless or talk about suicide or they might experience a loss of friends or disinterest in their peer group.

So, the big question. How can we make a difference? As parents and caregivers, it's so important to educate ourselves engaging with bullying presentations, anti-bullying initiatives, local and national resources. Communicate openly with your child. Listen empathically. If you believe your child has been a victim of bullying, ask your child what he or she thinks should be done. Seek help from the

child's teacher or school counselor. Do not encourage fighting back. Help your child practice being assertive in what to say to a bully and encourage your child to be with friends or to travel in groups.

Reaching out to help

If you suspect bullying behaviors from a child, talk to the child. Talk with their pediatrician, their teachers, their principal, their school counselor. This could be a symptom of an underlying treatable disorder like ADHD or depression. If it continues, a comprehensive evaluation by a mental health professional can be helpful for you and your child to understand what is the cause and creating a plan to stop. The person who has the most control in a bullying dynamic is often the bystander. If your child is aware of someone being bullied encourage them to notify someone to get help. This is the most important thing that we can do for our children and encourage them to do. And advocate for your local schools to implement an evidence based bullying prevention program school-wide.

Educate, communicate and inform

Thank you for spending a few minutes with me today. Remember, bullying can happen anywhere, to anyone at any time. Stay aware and get help early. Work with children to insure they know where to get help for themselves as well as any time they see others being bullied. Keep open communication with your child. Ask if they've ever experienced bullying. And, in the workplace, work with your supervisors or HR to report any concerns. Prevention and support make a big difference.

Sources:

StopBullying.Gov. [Facts about Bullying. Statistics.](#) September 28, 2017. March 1, 2018

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Pacer's National Bullying Prevention Center. [Together We Can Create a World Without Bullying.](#) 2018. March 1, 2018

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Please note that there may be many other explanations for any or all of the afore delineated [behaviors/characteristics/symptoms]. This information is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all signs concerning such delineated [behaviors/characteristics/symptoms] or warning signs of suicide and should not be used as a stand-alone instrument. Each potential situation presents its own unique set of challenges. Information is not a substitute for diagnosis, treatment or professional health care and is not meant to replace the advice of a health care professionals. Contact a health care professional with any questions or concerns about specific health care needs.

At all times consult with your company's Human Resources, Legal and other professionals to properly assess your observations and apply your company's policies regarding harassment and bullying.

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