

Know! The End of Bullying Begins With YOU

10/11/2017



Wondering why we hear so much about bullying? Because there's way too much of it going on and it's a huge problem for everyone involved.

Students report getting bullied most often because of looks, body shape, race and sexual orientation. While every child is at risk for being the target of bullying, young people with disabilities or special education needs get bullied two to three times more often than their peers. At the same time, children with disabilities are also at an increased risk for bullying others as well.

In 2016, more than one in five students reported being bullied. According to research, however, the majority of young people who are bullied do not report it. And the older a student becomes, the less likely he or she is to tell anyone – including peers – which is especially bad news because peer intervention is so important.

More than half of all bullying situations come to a halt when a peer steps in. We're not talking stepping into the middle of a school fight (in that situation you'd want to encourage your child to grab a teacher to help). We're talking about supportive actions, like befriending the person being bullied, letting them know they are not alone or helping them tell someone, like a school resource officer, teacher or school counselor.

When it comes to a bullying situation, there is typically a target, a bully and bystanders. Regardless of what position a child is in, the consequences can be detrimental.

Youth who experience bullying are at an increased risk for poor school performance, sleeping difficulties, low self-esteem, feelings of fear, anxiety, depression and even suicidal thoughts.

Youth who engage in bullying are also at increased risk for academic problems, in addition to a greater likelihood for substance use and violent behavior during later adolescence and adulthood.

There is typically not a lot of sympathy for a person who bullies others, but oftentimes, a child engages in such behavior due to peer pressure, fear, insecurity, a lack of positive role models and sometimes as a response to being bullied themselves. These do not excuse the behavior, but may provide a better understanding of where the behavior originates.

Youth who both engage in bullying and are the target of bullying themselves are at the highest risk for a variety of mental health and behavior problems.

Even **witnesses of bullying** experience negative consequences. They say they feel less safe at school and report feelings that range from anger to guilt to fear. They often want to help, but they don't know how.

As parents, we need to be specific in telling our children:

- It is never okay to hurt, harm or humiliate another person with your words or behavior.
- It is never okay for anyone to do this to you either; you deserve respect, kindness and to feel safe.
- If you experience bullying, please tell me or another trusted adult – we can help make it stop
- If you witness someone being bullied, do something – **YOU** can make a difference!

Remember to follow [Start Talking! on Twitter](#) and [Like us on Facebook](#).

Learn how to get the drug prevention conversation started at [StartTalking.Ohio.Gov](#).