

BULLYING

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

The Journal of the American Medical Association reports that one-third of U.S. students experience bullying, either as a target or a perpetrator.

BULLYING CAN HAVE SEVERE IMPACTS ON CHILD WELLNESS



**BULLYING IS PAINFUL, LASTING AND RELATED TO LOW SELF-ESTEEM, SUICIDAL
THOUGHTS, ANGER, AND OTHER MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH PROBLEMS**

YOU CAN OPEN A DIALOGUE AND ENSURE SAFETY FOR OUR CHILDREN

PARENTS GUIDE ON BULLYING

What is Bullying?

Bullying is aggressive behavior. It occurs when a child is targeted by one or more youth with repeated negative actions over a period of time.

Scope of The Problem

Bullying comprises of intentional attempts to cause discomfort or injury.

- Name-calling
- Obscene gesturing or malicious teasing
- Exclusion, threats, or rumors
- Physical hitting (kicking, pushing and choking)

28%

of students, in 6th through 12th grade, report being bullied.

70% of teachers and students have witnessed bullying in their schools.



- Sending insults/threats
- Spreading rumors
- Hacking accounts to send damaging posts/chats
- Circulating nude/sexual photos of someone else

Over 50%

of adolescents and teens have been bullied online, and about the same number have engaged in cyber bullying

The Impact of Bullying on Children and Teens

Bullying causes important changes and effects on both victim and bully

The Victim of Bullying

Short Term Effects:

Social isolation • Feelings of shame • Sleep disturbance • Changes in eating habits • Low self-esteem • School avoidance • Symptoms of anxiety (including bedwetting, higher risk of illness, psychosomatic symptoms or physical complaints + no medical cause) • Symptoms of Depression

Long Term Effects:

Chronic depression • Increased risk of suicidal thoughts, suicide plans, and suicide attempts • Anxiety disorders • PTSD • Poor general health • Self-destructive behavior (Self-harm) • Substance abuse • Difficulty establishing trusting relationships

The Bully

Short Term Effects:

• Poor school performance (missed school due to suspensions increases this risk) • Increased truancy risk • Difficulty maintaining social relationships • Increased risk of substance abuse

Long Term Effects:

Without proper treatment, bullying behavior is likely to continue into adulthood:

• Risk of spousal or child abuse • Risk of antisocial behavior • Substance abuse • Less likely to be educated or employed

Immediate intervention and long-term follow-up can help mediate some of these effects.

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Steps to Bullying

Parent to child talks are essential.



Teach kids to respect others before they start school and talk about this on an ongoing basis. **Even small acts of teasing should be stopped**, don't fail to correct this behavior because a child is young. This is exactly when to stop it.

Teach your child to be assertive.



Encourage your children to express their feelings clearly, say no when they feel uncomfortable or pressured, **stand up for themselves without fighting** and walk away in dangerous situations.

Stop Bullying When You See It.



Adults who remain silent when bullying occurs are **encouraging it and making it worse**. Adult presence and inaction tells the bully that they can continue while showing the victim they are alone.

Listen and Support Children Who Speak Up.



Telling an adult about bullying is not easy for children. If a child comes to you seeking assistance with bullying, **spend time listening to them and provide affirmation and support before taking actions**. Read through and discuss our Bullying Checklist with your child as a resource.

Recognize Signs of Depression.



Persistent bullying can develop signs of depression like sadness, isolation, and sleeping problems. These symptoms can affect their relationships and school performance. **Make sure to reach out and get help when you see these signs.**

Teach Children to Take Action.



Tell your children to take action when they see **bullying behavior**. Tell them to speak out against the bully and inform a teacher if the behavior doesn't stop. Bullying continues only when we allow it to.

Keep Schools Accountable.



Communicate clear policies and consequences. Bullying is less likely in schools where adults are involved and firm about stopping bullying behaviors. Send out a clear message at your school that bullying will have negative consequences.

If your child is being bullied in school:

Contact the following people in this order

1. Teacher
2. School counselor
3. School principal
4. School superintendent
5. State Department of Education

Visit stopbullying.gov to learn more and find resources

If your school is not addressing harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability or religion:

Contact the following people in this order

1. School superintendent
2. State Department of Education
3. US Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights
4. US Department of Justice, Civil Rights Commission



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www.mhageorgia.org



[@mhaofgeorgia](https://www.facebook.com/mhaofgeorgia)



[@mhaofga](https://www.instagram.com/mhaofga)



[@MHAofGeorgia](https://twitter.com/MHAofGeorgia)

For Immediate Access to Routine or Crisis Services
Georgia Crisis & Access Line
1-800-715-4225
mygcal.com



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www.nimh.gov