

Are you being bullied?

So, you're being bullied, huh? That can feel pretty awful. But, no matter how bad it makes you feel sometimes, you should know you're not alone. That's right ... there are plenty of kids all over the world who go through the same things you do every day. And, even though you may feel helpless sometimes, there are a lot of things you and others can do to help stop the bullying. Give these tips a try.

Always tell an adult. It's hard to talk about serious things with adults sometimes, but they can help put a stop to bullying. Tell an adult that you trust and can talk to - your parents, your teacher, your school counselor, your coach, your neighbor. If you've told a grown-up before and they haven't done anything about it, tell someone else. And if you're afraid to tell an adult that you have been bullied, get another person - like a friend or a sister or brother - to go with you. Having someone else there to support you can make it a lot less scary. Tell the adults exactly what has happened - who did the bullying, where and when it happened, how long it's been happening to you, and how it's making you feel. If you talk with an adult at your school, ask them what they will do to help stop the bullying. It is their job to help keep you safe. Most adults really care about bullying and will do everything they can to help you.

Stay in a group. Kids who bully like to pick on kids who are by themselves a lot— it's easier and they're more likely to get away with their bad behavior. If you spend more time with other kids, you may not be an easy "target" and you'll have others around to help you if you get into a difficult situation!

If it feels safe, try standing up to the person who is bullying you. If the person who is bullying you thinks you won't do anything about it, they are more likely to keep picking on you. This doesn't mean you should fight back or bully them back. Instead, tell the person bullying you that you don't like it and that they should stop! Keep it simple. You might just say, "Cut it out, Miranda!", and then walk away. If possible, try to talk to them in a calm voice. Kids who bully often like to see that they can make you upset. If you're afraid to talk to the person who is bullying you by yourself, then you might want to ask someone else to be there with you. Kids who bully are more likely to listen, and less likely to bully you, when you're with someone and not alone. If you're not comfortable standing up to someone who has bullied you, that's definitely OK! Just walk away. But be sure to tell an adult.

If you are being bullied online, don't reply. This may actually make the bullying worse. Instead, be sure to tell a family member or another adult you trust. If possible, block any more communications from this person. (For example, it might be a good idea only to accept messages from people you know.) Save evidence of the bullying. If you get a nasty e-mail, print it out or save it so that you can show it to an adult.

Join clubs or take part in activities to make other friends. Sometimes, it can help to join clubs or take part in activities that interest you. Think about joining a sports team, taking an art class, or joining a scouting group, for example. You can meet other kids who share your interests and you might make some good friends!

What NOT to do if you are being bullied

DON'T...

- Think it's your fault. Nobody deserves to be bullied!
- Fight back or bully a person back. This probably won't make things any better and it might get you into big trouble. Besides, you should try to act better than the person who bullies you.
- Keep it to yourself and just hope the bullying will "go away." It's normal to want to try to ignore bullying and hope that it will stop—or hope that the person will start to pick on someone else. But, often, bullying won't stop until adults and other kids get involved. So, be sure to report the bullying.
- Skip school or avoid clubs or sports because you're afraid of being bullied. Missing out on school or activities that you enjoy isn't the answer. You have a right to be there!
- Think that you're a "tattle tale" if you tell an adult that you've been bullied. Telling is NOT tattling! It's the right thing to do.
- Hurt yourself. Some kids who are bullied get so sad and depressed that they may try to hurt themselves because they think there is nothing else they can do. This definitely isn't the answer. Talk with an adult immediately and tell them how you are feeling. They can help stop the bullying

*Online Resource: *Stop Bullying Now:* <http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/kids/>