

A Young Person's Guide to Handle Bullying

There is no reason for you to have to put up with any kind of bullying. All of us can play a part in making our environment a Bully-Free one.

(This brochure is adapted, with permission, from the Singapore Children's Society's Bully-Free Programme at www.bullyfree.sg)

What is bullying?

When a bully intentionally and repeatedly does something hurtful to a person, who may then feel a loss of power or control in these situations.

What are the types of bullying?

- Physical bullying

When physical aggression is used against a person, or on their personal belongings. (e.g. hitting, kicking, punching, spitting)

- Verbal bullying

When a person is hurt or shamed through the use of words. (e.g. teasing, name calling, inappropriate sexual comments)

- Social bullying

An indirect form of bullying that causes harm to a person by damaging their friendships and feelings of being accepted by social groups (e.g. intentionally excluding the person, spreading rumours)

- Cyberbullying

When a person is intentionally hurt, shamed, or excluded from groups through electronic means. (e.g. use of the internet, mobile phones, video game systems, or other technology)

Is it normal to have all these feelings? Victims of bullying may feel intense feelings, including feeling afraid, sad, angry, ashamed, guilty, or helpless. It is also common for victims to feel blamed and worried about speaking up, resulting in feelings of being isolated and alone.

Although bullies often affect how we feel about ourselves, remember that it is not your fault. Regardless of what the bullies may say, you should not be made to feel bad for who you are or what you do. The problem lies in the bully's behaviours, not you. And most importantly, remember that you are not alone.

What can I do to deal with a bully?

It is important to use these strategies ***repeatedly and consistently***, until the bullying stops.

1. **Stay connected to supportive people and participate in positive activities.**

Victims are often made to feel isolated and powerless. But that need not be the case. You can regain control by staying connected with safe adults and peers. Get involved in activities you enjoy, or events that allow you to meet other supportive people. If this feels too difficult, try taking

the first step by identifying one safe person and reach out to them over text or in person.

- 2. It may not be easy, but try to appear calm. Ignore the bully.** Bullies behave cruelly in the hopes of getting a reaction from you, so when you remain calm and uninterested, they will have no other emotional reactions to act upon. Practising a series of slow and deep abdominal breathing daily can help reduce distress quickly when needed.
- 3. Tell them to stop, and then walk away.** While staying calm, maintain eye contact, speak clearly and firmly. Mention the name of the bully, that you do not like to be treated this way, and ask them to stop. Count up to 50 while walking away. Practise this strategy at home and/or with a safe person, as it will help you feel more confident to use it when the time comes.
- 4. Keep a safety plan in mind.** It is sometimes safer to leave the situation immediately, especially when you feel unsafe or when it is difficult to remain calm. Move to places where there are crowds, or look for trusted adults/peers.

Consider putting the plan in your phone for easy access, including names of trusted adults and safe places.

- 5. Tell a trusted adult e.g. a parent, teacher, or school counsellor.** It helps you to feel supported and more confident. Include details like date, location, people involved, and what was said or done. It is completely okay to report repeated future incidences, even if it involves the same bully, as this helps others to understand the full extent of the situation.

What about cyber-bullies online?

- 1. Do not respond.** It is helpful to avoid responding to hurtful messages, take time out and talk to a trusted adult or friend until you are calm. It will feel difficult to not respond, but repeating this will eventually stop the bully from reaching out.
- 2. Block communication from the cyber-bully.** You may wish to take a step further to cease all communication with the bully. It is recommended to keep your profile private as this reduces the risks of unwanted communication. Visit <https://bullyfree.sg/children-youth/> for specific information on how to block

communication on the different social media platforms.

- 3. Reduce time spent on social media,** or video gaming platforms. Identify an alternative positive activity to engage in, as this will help limit exposure to the bullying and gives you the emotional distance required to feel calmer and centred again.
- 4. Take a screenshot of the bullying message as evidence and tell a trusted adult immediately.** When messages become threatening or sexually abusive, discuss with the trusted adult about making a Police report.

Get in touch with these organisations for professional support and help.

- **Singapore Children's Society (Bully-Free Programme)**
Website: www.bullyfree.sg
Phone: 6273 2010
Email: BullyFree.sg@childrensociety.org.sg
- **Coalition Against Bullying for Children and Youth (CABCY)**
Phone : 6223 3122
Email : ask@cabcy.org.sg
- **TOUCH Cyber Wellness**
Phone: 1800 377 2252
Email : cyberwellness@touch.org.sg