

MENTAL HEALTH TIDBIT (BETTER INFORMED TOGETHER)

UNDERSTANDING BULLYING AND PROVIDING SUPPORT

DAUPHIN COUNTY MH/A/DP
APRIL 2021 MENTAL HEALTH TIDBIT

Bullying used to mean slamming someone's books, pushing them into lockers or starting fights with them. Now children and teens are frequently bullied through use of the internet or cell phones, referred to as cyberbullying. Bullying is something done intentionally and repeatedly to make another person feel angry, sad, or scared. Examples of cyberbullying include sending hurtful texts or instant messages, posting embarrassing photos or videos on social media and spreading mean rumors online or with cell phones or other electronics.

Anyone can be a target of bullying because it varies from situation to situation. There is not a stereotype for a bully, and many people can become one without anyone else even noticing. If your child is being bullied or cyberbullied, first reassure them that you love and support them. You can consider contacting your child's school or the bully's parents if known. There are some additional things you can also do to help.

- ❖ **Discuss accountability for their actions online.** You must talk to your child about social media. They need to understand what they are typing and posting can hurt the feelings of others. They should not forward negative photos or comments. They also must understand that almost nothing on the internet is truly private, and whatever you post never fully disappears.
- ❖ **Help your child or teen talk about it with friends.** To break the cycle of bullying, it takes one person to step up and speak out. Instead of standing by and hoping the problem will be fixed by some else, teach your child to stand up for their friends whether by telling a trusted adult, making someone feel included or by not approving of the actions taking place.
- ❖ **Let them know it is okay to ask for help.** If your child or teen is being bullied, make sure they know that they can talk to you, a trusted friend, or another adult to find a solution. Asking for help does not make them a tattletale or coward. It is important to help them stand up for themselves and to have them ask others stand up for them as well.
- ❖ **Talk to your child or teen about practical strategies.** Sign off the computer. Do not respond or retaliate. Block the bully by taking them off the friends list or deleting messages without reading them. Save and print out bullying messages so you have the proof to show the school or others if needed.

Excerpted from: <https://childmind.org/article/help-kids-deal-cyberbullying> **AND** <https://www.parents.com/parenting/better-parenting/teenagers/im-a-teenager-this-is-what-i-want-parents-to-know-about-teen-bullying/>