



## Advice Gone Wrong

A PEATC  
Bullying Prevention and  
Awareness Brief  
for Virginia's Parents

### WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is characterized by aggression used within a relationship where the aggressor(s) has more real or perceived power than the target. Bullying can involve overt physical behavior or verbal, emotional, or social behaviors.

Cyber bullying can include offensive text messages or e-mails, rumors or embarrassing photos posted on social networking sites, or fake online profiles.

100 N Washington Street, Ste. 234  
Falls Church, VA 22046  
800-869-6782 / 703-923-0010  
www.peatc.org

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## ADVICE GONE WRONG

### The Teen Perspective On Advice That Is Not Helpful

Bullying is not cool. If there was a way to end it, teens would be all for it, but they can't do it on our own. Adults need to give good advice, provide options, show solutions that work. Here's how some adults' reactions look to teens.

#### **Bullying is part of growing up.**

When I talk with you about bullying, it doesn't help when you tell me that I will grow out of this . . . that it happens to everyone . . . that it wouldn't happen if I just stood up for myself. I'm telling you because I can't handle this by myself. Don't shut me out. I need your help.

#### **Everyone needs to be nice to each other.**

Telling us to just be nice and stop bullying may work for some teens, but for the ones who really need the message, it's just not that simple. Kids bully for lots of reasons; some do it to feel powerful, others because they are being bullied. This isn't just a one-solution problem.

#### **It can't be that bad. Let's just see what happens.**

Sit by and doing nothing? Not gonna work. That's just encouraging people to look the other way. We see silence as supporting the situation. It's like saying bullying is just the way it is and it's okay.

#### **If you ignore them, they will probably stop.**

Just ignore them? Adults tell us that all the time. Do your problems go away by ignoring them? Your annoying boss? Bills? I wish I could ignore my homework and it would just go away. Enough said.

#### **Try talking with them.**

Talk it out. Really?? That solution might work in your world – not mine. Talking it out means both sides are comfortable saying what's on their minds. You try being rational when you're being pounded on. It is intimidating to be made fun of.

#### **Let them know that it makes you feel bad.**

Don't ask me to tell the bully how I feel. Are you kidding!? If a guy is trying to make me feel bad, wouldn't that just let him know he's won?

#### **If you are getting pushed around, hit 'em back.**

Fighting? That's your answer? The last kid at school who tried that ended up suspended for three days.

