



The Inside Story

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.

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THE INSIDE STORY

Reasons That Student Might Not Tell An Adult

Meet Pete

Pete is a dude with a lot going on inside. He has zeroed in on some of the reasons teens don't tell an adult about bullying. Some of those reasons are listed below, followed by another way of looking at it.

Who'd help me?

Teens who are bullied often think they have to handle it on their own.

But really ... If you're being bullied, it's ok to ask for help from friends, parents, teachers, or others you trust. In fact, it's a really good idea.

It's Too Personal

Some kids get picked on because of something they did, like doing something crazy at a party. If they tell about being bullied, then they have to explain why. Not an easy thing to do.

But really . . . You're not the first person to have this happen. Ever hear of "The Illiad"? The movie version, "Troy," stars Brad Pitt as a warrior who has just one weak point, the heel of his foot, and his enemy uses that against him. Facing up to something that you did can be hard. But, if you are being teased and bullied because of it, you might feel better if you talk with someone you trust.

My Parents Go Crazy

Some kids go weak in the knees when they think how their parents might overreact. They're sure their folks will do something to make the situation worse, like calling the school or the other kid's parents.

But really ... You can let your parents know that you are not asking them to fix the problem—just work with you to find a solution. Explain that you want their help, ideas, and support, but you want to handle it yourself. That'll put the starch back in your knees.

I'll Get Punished

Some parents think the solution to their teen's harassment by cell phone is to take away the phone.

But really ... If you talk with your parents about what's happening and ask them to help solve it, they'll be more likely to trust you. Explain that it's bullying—not the technology—that needs to go away.

The “Rents Will Worry

Some kids don’t want their parents to worry about them. Think that their folks may already have enough problems, without them being a problem, too.

But really ... Your folks may have a lot going on in their lives, but you are important to them. They’ll have less to worry about if they can help you solve your problem—but they can’t help you unless they know what’s going on.

I’m No Snitch!

Nobody wants to be a tattletale. That’s kid stuff.

But really . . . Telling isn’t tattling. You know the difference. You tell to protect someone; you tattle or snitch to get someone in trouble. Not talking about bullying only protects the kid who is bullying, and why would you want to do that?

I Suck!

Kids who are bullied often feel ashamed and don’t know what to do. They think it’s their fault.

But really . . . If you’re bullied, know this: It is NOT your fault. You are NOT to blame. You have a right to feel good about yourself.

I’m Scared!

Kids who bully sometime threaten that things will get worse for the target if they tell.

But really . . . If you don’t tell, it just protects the person bullying and it will probably get worse anyway. So talk with a trusted adult. Yeah, it’s definitely scary to get bullied—but don’t let fear stop you from taking your power back.

I’m Still a Kid

Some teens are told to “man up,” that they could have stopped the bullying. They’re told if they just stood up to the person or acted differently, this wouldn’t be happening to them.

But really ... You’re not being bullied because you did something wrong. It can happen to anyone.

Adults Don’t Get It

Some adults give advice that’s not helpful. Telling a teen to fight back or saying “sticks and stones may break your bones, but words can never hurt you” just doesn’t cut it.

But really . . . You know what rings true, so trust your heart. Like, you know that words may not break your bones, but they do hurt for a long time and can make you feel broken on the inside.

No One Will Listen

Some kids try to tell an adult, but they don’t feel heard. They get the message that bullying is no big deal, that they should just ignore it, or that bullying is just a part of growing up.

But really ... Bullying is a big deal. If you talk with one adult and don’t get help, ask someone else. If that doesn’t work, find another adult. There are grown-ups who care and will help you.

