

GIRLS GUIDE TO END BULLYING

(GirlsGuidetoEndBullying.org)

Parent Manual

The Girls Guide to End Bullying (The Girls Guide) is an online intervention for helping students, teachers, and parents learn about and stop bullying.

The Girls Guide:

- Addresses numerous forms of bullying particular to girls.
- Identifies several types of bullying, some of which are easy to overlook.
- Targets both those who are bullied and those who see bullying happen.
- Provides specific actions to take for specific types of bullying.

The Girls Guide's **Parent Manual** not only helps parents use The Girls Guide web-based intervention but also provides strategies for parents to:

- Control their own emotions.
- Talk to their daughter about being bullied.
- Talk to their daughter's school about bullying.
- Help their daughter if she is the bully.
- Talk to their daughter about being a bystander.

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Chapter 1: How to Use The Girls Guide

Girls Guide to End Bullying can be used to help parents address bullying.

To get started with The Girls Guide we suggest that parents:

1. Read through the Girls Guide to End Bullying website (girlsguidetoendbullying.org). This will not only familiarize you with The Girls Guide and how it works but will also provide basic information parents need to understand bullying from their daughter's perspective.
2. Carefully read the chapters contained in this Parent Manual. The information in the following chapters is meant to aid parents in helping their daughter deal with bullying by providing tips and specific actions for addressing bullying.

HOW THE GIRLS GUIDE WEBSITE IS ORGANIZED

The Girls Guide is organized around five types of bullying

Physical	Hitting, kicking, slapping, threatening
Verbal	Teasing, calling names, put-downs
Sexual	Sexual comments, rumors, jokes
Relational	Gossip, silent treatment, excluding
Cyber	Harassing through social media, text messages, emails

On the website each of these types of bullying is divided into five sections:

Recognize Bullying

To stop bullying, girls need to know what it looks like. This section gives an easy to understand definition and examples, followed by videos of situations that clearly establish what that type of bullying looks like.

After the Bullying

This section answers the question, “*So why should I care or want to play a part in stopping bullying?*” Here girls will watch the same video but will see the perspective of the victim and the negative effects bullying can have.

If You See Bullying Happening

This section helps girls understand what to do and not do when they see bullying. They will follow the same videos, but this time from the perspective of a bystander who both reinforces the bullying and helps the victim. The goal is to give clear examples of the right and wrong ways of dealing with bullying when they see it happening.

If Bullying Happens to You

This section gives specific actions girls can take if they are being bullied. The videos will then show the victims and how they handle the bullying they are experiencing. The goal is to give several examples of actions victims can take to stop the bullying. Girls can then find one or two actions they are most comfortable doing.

Bring it Together

Here, the main points of each section are highlighted. There will be a quiz specific to the type of bullying in the section that girls can take if they think they may have been a bully as well as tips for changing their behaviors. There will also be a link for everyone to read about how to be a better friend.

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

In addition to the specific content within each section, there are also supplemental resources for girls to use to gain a better understanding of the content being covered.

Activities

The activities are meant to help girls think about and practice strategies and material covered on the website.

PDFs

The PDFs cover everything from how girls can handle their emotions when being bullied to what to do if the bullying has become extreme.


Think You Know

These questions are meant to help girls think more critically about the videos and the types of bullying being cover.

LESSON PLANS

The Girls Guide provides Lesson Plans designed to help teachers lead their students through the site. While these Lesson Plans are designed for teachers, they can also be utilized by parents. There are five sets of Lesson Plans, one for each type of bullying. The Lesson Plans for each type of bullying can be found on the right hand side of each “Recognize Bullying” sections under “Lesson Plans”.

Mini Lessons

Each of the Lesson Plans also covers a topic that will help girls better deal with bullying. The Activities, Group Discussion Questions, PDFs and Think You Know Questions cover these Mini Lessons and are marked by a .

Physical Bullying Lesson	Learning how to control your emotions when being bullied
Verbal Bullying Lesson	How to verbally respond to a bully and how to be assertive
Sexual Bullying Lesson	How to talk to an adult about bullying and the difference between tattling and telling
Relational Bullying Lesson	How to control “Worst Case Scenario Thoughts”
Cyber Bullying Lesson	What to do when bullying has become extreme

HOW TO USE THE LESSON PLANS

Although the Lesson Plans were designed to be used in the classroom, parents can also utilize the Lesson Plans to help their child deal with bullying.

Parents, you can choose to use the Lesson Plans based on the type of bullying your daughter is experiencing, or you can use the Lesson Plans comprehensively meaning starting with Physical Bullying and moving through each lesson plan. When using the Lesson Plans comprehensively, your daughter will experience all material on the website.

- Print out the Lesson Plans you have chosen to use.
- Read the Introduction which is found on the first page of each Lesson Plan.
- In the introduction is a section titled **BEFORE THE LESSON** which gives instructions on what to do before using each Lesson Plan.
 - These instructions will ask you to:

1. Read Chapter 1 in the Teacher Manual, [How to Use The Girls Guide in Your Classroom](#). The Teacher Manual can be found on the Start Guide on girlsguidetoendbullying.org

Parents, you may benefit from reading this chapter. The content is similar to this chapter but there are more detailed instructions on how teachers can use the Lesson Plans.

2. Read through the Lesson Plan. Become acquainted with the material and the layout of the Lesson Plan.
3. Choose the Activities, Group Discussion Topics, PDF's and Think You Know questions that will work best with your child.

Parents, you can choose what Activities, Group Discussion Topics, PDF's and Think You Know questions you want to use based on the type or types of bullying your daughter is experiencing and what you think will help her best.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE GIRLS GUIDE AND LESSON PLANS

- Introducing your daughter to the website
 - Open the website and read through the home page with your daughter.
 - Click on the Start Guide button located at the top right of the screen. Read through the Start Guide with them. This will help her and you understand how The Girls Guide works.
- Using the Website
 - Click on “Physical Bullying” on the top left of the screen (or the specific type of bullying you are focusing on). When the drop down box appears, click on the “Recognize Bullying” link.
 - Read through the material and watch the video(s). Use the activities, Group Discussion Topics, PDF’s and Think You Know Questions that you and she have chosen for that section.
 - When you finish with each section go to the bottom of the page, click on “Let’s take a look at what happens next” to navigate to the next section of the program.

Throughout this manual we will provide directions for using the site to help your daughter in specific situations such as teaching her how to respond to bullying or control her emotions. These directions will be titled: **On GirlsGuidetoEndBullying.org**

Chapter 2: What is Bullying?

You can't stop bullying if you don't know what it looks like.

A widely used definition of bullying is "an intentional, aggressive behavior that is repeated and marked by a difference in power." Most adults' perceptions of bullying fit this definition, but this is only one aspect of bullying. After reading through The Girls Guide (website) and watching our videos, you should see that bullying behaviors are much more complex and varied.

There are an unlimited number of bullying acts that can be directed toward a victim. Many of these actions:

- Are subtle.
- Are indirect.
- May not have an apparent power imbalance.
- Involve a single incident.

What parents need to be aware of are the specific behaviors that fit into the following descriptions:

1. Any intended action that hurts or harms another person physically or emotionally.
 - Any student has the ability to hurt another student regardless of power.
 - It can happen directly to the victim or behind their backs.
2. Can be circumstantial or chronic.
 - This means that the bullying can be a single incident or it can happen over a long period of time.
 - A victim may be the target of not just one bully, but many students at one time, or many students over a period of time.

In other words, if the behavior of one person harms another emotionally or physically it should be addressed because adults don't know if it's chronic or is marked by a power difference. While this description encompasses both small and more severe behaviors, we do not expect that they will be treated the same. Each incident will need its own specific reaction from educators and parents depending in its severity.

Chapter 3: Controlling Your Own Emotions

When dealing with bullying it is important that parents remain calm and in control of their own emotions.

Hearing that your child is being bullied can cause a wide range of emotions. Parents may react with anger, sadness, frustration, shock, defensiveness and even embarrassment. These are your protective instincts, which are normal and okay to feel. But if you want to help your child you need to step back and consider the situation and the next steps carefully. To do this, you need to remain calm and in control of your own emotions.

WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO REMAIN CALM?

This might seem like an easy question to answer but consider the following:

- When we talk to teen girls about why they **don't** tell their parents about being bullied, we hear over and over again that they are scared their parents will “freak out”. Children will do almost anything to keep from upsetting their parents, including keeping secrets that may be harmful to them. When you react too strongly, even if you are being protective, your daughter may feel defensive or upset and she may avoid talking to you again about bullying.
- Being bullied is humiliating and so is talking about it. If you become upset or show strong emotions, they may become upset too and feel worse about themselves and the situation.
- Girls are scared parents will take action without talking to and consulting them first. By staying calm it encourages your daughter to trust you and will help you both think logically about the next steps to take.
- When you remain calm, you encourage your daughter to tell her story, let her feelings out, and help her release stress she may be feeling.

TIPS FOR REMAINING CALM

- Before reacting you need to listen! Listening to your daughter is necessary so that you know **how** to react. As much as it hurts to listen you need to be open and able to hear what she has to say.
- While your daughter is talking, try to view the situation objectively. This will help you determine how serious the situation is. It is okay to take your daughter's side, but try not to inflate the situation with your own feelings and opinions.
- Use emotion regulation by breathing or counting to 100. Do what you would normally do to calm your nerves and feelings. If you need some other ideas, read through the list we provide girls in the Appendix on page 57.
- Do not personalize what is happening to your daughter. Of course this problem is personal to you, but try to not project your own experiences with bullying on your daughter's experience. It is okay to empathize with her, but bringing up your past will only make you and her feel worse.
- Wait to take any action. Of course you want to protect your daughter and feeling angry at the bully is okay. But don't take any action unless you are calm, have had time to think about the situation and have talked with your daughter about what to do next.
- Focus on how you can be a loving and supportive parent.
- If all else fails, bring someone else into the conversation who you trust and can help keep things calm such as a spouse, family member or family friend.

Chapter 4: If Your Daughter Has Been Bullied

Talking to and supporting your daughter after she has been bullied is an important step in stopping the bullying.

It takes a tremendous amount of courage for most girls to talk to their parents about being bullied. By the time they have told you about the bullying they have probably been dealing with the problem for a while, are feeling pretty bad, and are embarrassed that they couldn't handle it on their own. As parents it is your goal to help your child feel safe, keep the lines of communication open, and let them know there are ways to stop the bullying.

TIPS FOR TALKING TO YOUR DAUGHTER

Stay calm

- Staying calm is important because it will help your daughter tell her story and help both of you decide the best plan of action.
- Read Chapter 3 on page 10 for tips on controlling your own emotions.

Listen

- As much as it hurts to hear your daughter recount details of being victimized, it is your job as a parent to listen to your child tell her story.
- The process of talking has an empowering effect on a girl's ability to cope. This may be more beneficial to her than any other action you could take.
- Listening can help you determine if there is more that she is not telling you and can help you determine exactly what your daughter wants or needs out of the conversation.
- Do not interrogate her while she talks. For example, do not immediately ask who it is or when it happened. This will most likely make her feel defensive. Let the story unfold as she wants to tell it.

Take her and the problem seriously

- Oftentimes girls do not tell adults about bullying because they don't think anyone will believe them or will blow the situation off. It is important to trust her if she tells you she is being bullied.
- This will not only keep her talking to you, but will help build her self-esteem because she feels she has support to help stop the bullying.

Do not blame or criticize her

- Do not make her feel like she caused the bullying or make her feel bad for how she tried to handle the situation on her own.
- Do not ask "What did you do to bring this on?" or "What did you do to make them do that to you?" This is not your daughter's fault. No one, no matter what, deserves to be bullied.
- Avoid judgmental comments such as, "Well that probably made things worse" or "You should have just told me sooner."

Be patient

- Your daughter will probably not tell you the whole story right away. This is okay.
- Once she realizes that you are not going to judge her or become upset, she will be much more willing to talk to you.

Be empathetic

- Although what is happening might seem trivial to you, it can feel devastating to her.
- Wait to express your opinion or give advice, first focus on being understanding.
- Examples of things you can say:
 - o "You sound really upset about what happened."
 - o "It must have been hard trying to deal with the bullying on your own. "
 - o "I know that you are having a hard time, but this was not your fault and you have made the right choice talking to me about it."

Find out what your daughter wants from the conversation

- Girls often say they don't tell parents about bullying because they are afraid parents will take action against their wishes and make the bullying problem worse for them.
- It is important that you find out what your daughter wants from you, such as a shoulder to cry on, a good listener, or for you to take action for them. More often than not, she just wants someone to listen to her.
- Ask questions like, *"What can I do to make you feel better about the situation?"*

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP YOUR DAUGHTER

If handled correctly, you can play a central role in helping your daughter stop the bullying she is experiencing. It is important that you understand the following about bullying and helping your daughter:

- Most cases of bullying cannot be solved overnight. It will take a lot of work from you and your daughter and maybe even your family and her school to find a solution to the problem.
- Understand that bullying isn't something your daughter is going to get over immediately. She may have mood swings, changes in appetite or suffer from low-self-esteem. But with time and patience you can help her get back to her normal self.
- You and your daughter will need to work together to end the bullying. It is important that you do not take action or tell anyone else about the bullying unless you talk with your daughter. By telling you her story, she is putting all her trust in you.

The most important thing you can do is **listen**. This will be crucial in deciding what steps to take next.

Once she has told her story, no matter how serious you think the bullying is, the most important thing you can **ask** is, “*What can I do to make you feel better about the situation?*”

This question does several things:

- It keeps her in control of the situation.
- It will help you find out what she wants from you.
- It will help you decide together the next steps to take.

SPECIFIC ACTIONS FOR DIFFERENT SITUATIONS

Not all bullying situations are the same and your daughter may want different responses from you at different times. Below are examples of different situations and actions you can take. If you are not sure what your daughter wants or needs from you, ask her directly or read over these situations with her. Decide together what steps to take next. You may choose to use tips and actions from several of these sections.

If she **doesn't want you to take action** and the **bullying is not serious** (only one instance of bullying, the instance is actually a disagreement or misunderstanding) or **she is looking for someone to listen to her**.

- Tell her that you are there to talk anytime she wants and that you will not take any action without talking to her and consulting her first.
- If you do plan on telling someone else about the bullying, ask her first and tell her exactly who and when you plan to talk to them.
- Keep at it. Ask her how things are going, how she is feeling, if there is any more you can do. By doing this you are showing her that you care about her and want to help. This is also important because bullying can progress from bad to worse quickly so you want to encourage your daughter to continue talking to you.

- Be understanding. Expect her to have a difficult time with this. She might be more moody, cry easily, have changes in her eating and sleeping, or her grades may ever drop. Be patient.
- Spend more time with your daughter.
- If you think the bullying is actually a misunderstanding or disagreement, help her fill out the Conflict Resolution Form in the Appendix on page 55.
- Encourage her to read Girls Guide to End Bullying. Offer to go over the website with her.

If the **bullying is chronic** (is continuously happening) or your daughter is **asking for advice from you**.

1. Help your daughter learn how to control her emotional reactions to bullying.

This is important because your daughter's initial response to the bullying, whether it is an emotional or a physical response, can determine whether the bullying stops or continues.

- On GirlsGuidetoEndBullying.org
 - Read **Learn about Controlling Emotions**. This can be found in the Appendix on page 57 and in any of the "If this is happening to you" sections on the website.
 - Use the **Deep Breathing activity** with her. This activity will help your daughter learn quick and easy breathing exercises she can do when she is being bullied. This can be found in the Physical Bullying Lesson Plan.
 - Use the **Visualization activity**. This activity will teach your daughter how visualization can be used to help calm her down when she is being bullied. This can be found in the Physical Bullying Lesson Plan.

- Use the **Worst Case Scenario activity**. This activity will help her spot her own worst case scenario thoughts, understand how these thoughts can affect her, and how to change the thoughts into something positive. This can be found in the Relational Bullying Lesson Plan.
 - Help her think about other actions or ideas that she can use to help control her emotions.
 - Listening to music.
 - Embracing a healthy lifestyle. Join a gym, exercise, eat healthy, avoid caffeine.
 - Writing in a journal.
 - Talking to you or someone else.
 - Help her make a list of 2 or 3 things she can commit to doing to help control her reactions to the bullying.
 - Role play with her so she can practice these responses.
2. Help your daughter learn how to assertively and confidently respond to bullying. This is important because assertive, confident responses and body language can help your daughter put a stop to the bullying by showing she is not an easy mark.
- On GirlsGuidetoEndBullying.org
 - Use the **How to be Assertive: Using Body Language activity**. This activity will help your daughter think about what her body language looks like during passive, assertive and aggressive responses to bullying. This can be found in the Verbal Bullying Lesson Plan.
 - Use the **Understanding Fogging activity**. This activity will help your daughter understand how to use fogging and come up with her own fogging answers. This can be found in the Verbal Bullying Lesson Plan.

- Talk to her about what being assertive means and why it can be so important when responding to a bullying. Being assertive is standing up for yourself in a way that does not disrespect the other person. Being assertive can keep the situation from escalating.
- Practice and talk about different assertive, aggressive and passive responses and how these have different effects on the bullying situation.
- Help her think about previous responses she had to the situation and whether those were passive, aggressive or assertive. The goal is not to make her feel bad, but to help her change her passive and aggressive responses into assertive responses.
- Make an Assertive Bill of Rights. Help your daughter make a list of things she would allow in a healthy friendship such as *"I have the right to be respected by others."*
- Role play with your daughter and practice confident and assertive body language and responses to the bullying.

What to do if she is **being bullied by her own friends**.

If your daughter is being bullied, it may be her own friends doing the bullying. This will require patience and support on your part.

Your daughter may have attempted to conform or used her own tactics to stop the bullying such as:

- Playing down her ambitions or intelligence.
- Giving up a hobby or skill she once liked or was good at.
- Dressing differently, changing her hair or make up.
- Making choices or doing things she wouldn't normally do.

It is also important that parents understand that for your daughter, it can be more important to fit into the social standards of being a girl than being without friends. Ending a friendship(s) can instill fear and anxiety in your daughter, even if the friendship is unhealthy. It is important that you stay vigilant while helping your daughter end this type of bullying.

- On GirlsGuidetoEndBullying.org
 - Read the **Relational Bullying “Recognize Bullying” section** with her. Talk to her about why you think what is happening to her is considered bullying.
 - Read **What do to if you think your friendship might be ending**. This will help her think about being in healthy and unhealthy friendships and how to deal with unhealthy friendships. This can be found in the Appendix on page 56.
- Talk to her about what she thinks makes a healthy friendship and what she thinks makes an unhealthy friendship. For example:

Healthy	Unhealthy
If there is something your friend has an issue with, she comes to you and lets you know.	Talks about you behind your back or spreads rumors.
Your friend accepts you for you.	Is always putting you down.
Supports your ideas, accepts your opinions and is happy for you.	Doesn't support you or isn't happy for you when something good happens.
Your friend doesn't expect you to spend all your time with her and lets you be friends with who you choose.	Your friend does not want you to make other friends.

- If she wants to end the friendships(s) brainstorm ideas with her about how she can do that. Along with the PDF we provided, here are some other ideas:
 - Encourage her to participate in school activities that her friends are not involved in.
 - Do not talk bad about the person or the group even if they are talking bad about you.
 - Remove or block them on her Facebook or Twitter accounts for a while. They may say mean things about your daughter online so it is best not to be part of it.
- Role play what she will say and do when she sees her friends.

If your daughter **wants you to take action to stop the bullying**.

It is important that you and your daughter **decide together** what action to take. More often than not your daughter will not want you to take action, as teens usually want their parents to take hands off approach. It is important that you take time to talk with her about decisions on who you talk to, when you talk to them and if she wants to be involved. The following are some actions parents can take to stop the bullying:

- Document everything from your child's story:
 - The details of who, what, when, where. Write down anything you think will be important.
 - Keep notes, videos, text messages, online messages she receives from the bully(s).

- If the bullying is happening at school:
 - Contact the school.
 - Read chapter 5 on page 26 on how to talk to the school about your daughter and the situation.
- If the bullying is happening during extracurricular activities that are not associated with the school, contact the leader of these activities, such as coaches or group leaders.
- If the bullying is happening online:
 - Read our instructions on how to save evidence and how to contact the service provider of the website and report the bullying. This can be found in the “If Bullying Happens to You” Cyber Bullying section.
 - If your daughter is being threatened online, save evidence and go right to authorities. Let the law enforcement agency know that trained cyber-harassment volunteers at WiredSafety.org will work with them (without charge) to help them find the cyber bully offline and to evaluate the case.

If your daughter has been **threatened or physically assaulted**

- Explain to your daughter that as a parent you need to do everything possible to keep her safe and this includes contacting the police and school even if she doesn't want you to.
- Keep all evidence, document injuries by taking photographs or keep text messages, phone messages, or online comments that show these threats.
- Contact your local police station or go there directly.
- Contact the school.
- File a police report right away.
- Consider filing a restraining order.

OTHER IDEAS AND TIPS TO HELP YOUR DAUGHTER

The following tips and ideas are meant to be quick and easy actions to help build your daughter's self-esteem so she is better able to handle bullying in the future.

Build her self-confidence

- Start small: Help her think about something she can do well, easily and immediately. It needs to be something that demonstrates that she is capable of achieving her goals.
- Help her identify positive attributes: Talk to your daughter about things you and others think she is good at such as she is good with animals, or is strong academically or is funny. Help her make a list of these positive talents.
- Use visualization: Read the "Visualization" activity located in the Physical Bullying Lesson Plan. Ask her to imagine herself as the confident person she would like to become. Ask her to think about how she would feel, how others would see her, what her body language looks like, and how she would talk.
 - i. Write down a description of this person and the attributes she observes.
 - ii. Ask her to practice doing this every morning while she is getting ready.
 - iii. Role play this with her.
- Use affirmations: Help her come up with an affirmation that she can repeat to herself throughout the day. This is also good for helping to control emotions. Tell her to use this affirmation when she starts feeling stressed or upset about the bullying. For example if she feels she is not good enough, have her say "*I like myself just the way I am.*"
- Do something that she is good at: Help her make a list of several things she is good at. Have her pick one thing and together come up with a way that she can do this over the next week.
- Set goals: Help her set goals for herself in other areas of her life such as setting goals for her future, her academics, or other relationships.

- ❑ Personal style: Take her to get a new haircut or buy a new shirt. Shop her closet and help her put together some new outfits. Go to a beauty counter and get a mini makeover with her.

Help build her social skills and encourage a positive connection with others

- ❑ Leadership: Find leadership opportunities within her community such as at school, church, sports, etc. These will encourage responsibility and independence and can ease fears of trying new experiences.
- ❑ Become a tutor: Talk to the school and help your daughter become a tutor to another student who is younger than her.
- ❑ Volunteer: Find volunteer opportunities that she can engage in such as becoming a big sister, volunteering at a nursing home, etc.
- ❑ Teen groups: Help your daughter find student groups she can join at school or outside of school.
 - i. Religious groups, music lessons, art classes, support groups, sporting activities.
- ❑ Find a mentor: Teens often do not want to confide in their parents. Be willing to step aside and let another person take the mentor role such as an older cousin, an aunt/uncle, or trusted family friend.

OUTSIDE RESOURCES

Counseling

The shame surrounding bullying can take a toll on your daughter's mental health. It can cause isolation, anxiety, depression and poor self-esteem. A trained counselor or psychologist can provide a safe place for your daughter to help relieve some of the psychological effects. Not all incidences of bullying require seeking mental health help. This is a decision that you and your daughter must think about and make together.

Some things to look for that suggest your daughter might benefit from seeing a licensed counselor or psychologist:

- Changes in appetite (more or less).
- Changes in weight (loss or gain).
- Changes in sleep habits (more or less).
- Decline in social activities.
- Self-injurious behaviors:
 - o Cutting
 - o Scratching
 - o Hitting
 - o Bulimia/Anorexia
- Aggressive or emotional outbursts.

Finding the right counselor or psychologist can be difficult. We suggest:

- Calling your local university psychology department and ask for recommendations of people trained in working with teen girls.
- Calling a large clinic and ask for recommendations.
- Checking with friends and family.
- Doing an online search.

Support Groups

Your daughter may benefit from talking to others who have been bullied. She will have a chance to share her own experiences as well as hear others' experiences and advice. They can help her cope better with the situation and feel less lonely or isolated.

How to find a support group:

- Use online search engines such as:
 - HealthFinder.gov
 - www.overcomebullying.org/bullying-support-groups

- Psychologytoday.com. There is a search option under “The Group Therapy Directory.” Use this to search for groups meeting in your state and city.

- Use an online support group:
 - Supportgroups.com. Search for “bullying”.
 - <http://www.mdjunction.com/bullying>. This is a community of teens dedicated to dealing with bullying together.

Chapter 5: How to Talk to Your Daughter's School

The teachers and staff at your daughter's school can be a vital resource in ending the bullying she is experiencing.

What if the bullying is cyber bullying? Should I tell the school?

- Yes! Cyber bullying causes a disruptive learning environment so it is important for teachers and school staff to be aware that cyber bullying is happening.
- If your daughter is being cyber bullied, she is probably being bullied in other ways too. So, it is important that the school is informed about what is going on.
- In many states, schools are required to address cyber bullying in their anti-bullying policies.

What if the bullying happened off campus? Should I tell the school?

- Yes! Schools need to be aware of any bullying behaviors on campus or off campus.
- Some state laws and school policies cover off-campus bullying behaviors that create a negative learning environment for your daughter.
- If the bullying is happening off campus it is most likely happening during the school day too.

What if my daughter does not want me to tell the school but I think I should?

- If your daughter has asked you not to talk to the school, **you should take her request seriously but at the same time weigh her safety and well-being.** If you do decide to talk to the school, tell your daughter first.
- Explain to your daughter that as a parent you need to do everything possible to keep her safe, and informing the school of situation is important to her safety.
- Reassure her that you will ask the school to keep everything as confidential as they can.

TIPS FOR TALKING TO THE SCHOOL ABOUT THE BULLYING:

- Not all bullying should be reported to the school. You will need to use your discretion and take into account what your daughter wants and needs. If the bullying is serious and she is in danger or being threatened, always contact the school.
- It is important to explain to your daughter that the seriousness of the bullying is why you are contacting the school, but you wanted her to know first.

Every situation will be different and will require a different plan of action. Use the following tips and strategies as a guide when talking to the school.

- Make an appointment
 - It is best to call ahead and make an appointment. Do not show up at the school upset without an appointment. This will only make the situation worse for you and your daughter and little will be accomplished.
 - When you call the school, tell the receptionist why you are making an appointment. Some schools have a plan in place to handle bullying incidents and there may be a specific person parents can talk/meet with.
 - If there is not a specified person, ask your daughter if there is a teacher or a guidance counselor she is close to and make an appointment with them.
- Before the meeting
 - Write down the details of the bullying situation reported by your daughter.
 - Gather any evidence you may have saved such as text messages, letters, online comments, or pictures of physical bullying.
 - Look online or go to the school and get a copy of the Student Handbook. There are almost always written policies and rules for bullying, harassment and intimidation. Read up on these.

- Make a list of goals:
 - Goals for the conversation.
 - Goals for working with the school.
 - Goals you expect the school to strive for.
- During the meeting
 - This is the most important step you may take to stop the bullying. Although school administration and teachers should take the problem seriously, if you are upset, angry, or judgmental they may be less willing to listen to you and help you. Stay calm! Read Chapter 3 on page 10 to learn more about controlling your own emotions.
 - Before the meeting begins, ask that the conversation and names to be kept as private as possible.
 - Explain what happened, when, where and who was involved.
 - Explain how this is affecting your child. This is important because this can help the school staff realize that something needs to be done to help stop the bullying.
 - Talk with the staff about your goals.
 - Find out if there is anything else you should know about your daughter such as her grades, skipping class, or not attending lunch. This will help give you a better picture of how the bullying is affecting her and how you can help her.
 - Understand that the school will need a reasonable amount of time (3-5 days) to do their own investigation and work out problems to your and their satisfaction.
 - Agree upon what the school is going to do next, along with a time line of when you will hear back from them.
 - Write down all solutions and steps that were discussed in the meeting. Have everyone in the meeting sign it or get verbal agreements from those who are going to be active in taking the next steps.

- Ask for a staff member to give you feedback and progress while the school is handling the situation.
 - Get an email address or phone number for this person.
 - Use this contact information only if the school is not keeping you up-to-date on their progress or if the bullying happens again or worsens. The school's progress may be slowed if you bombard them with emails and phone calls.
- Ask if there is a teacher or guidance counselor that could keep an eye on your daughter or give her a place of refuge when she is being bullied.
- After the meeting
 - If your daughter did not go with you to the meeting, talk to your daughter about what happened.
 - Keep a log of who you talked to and when.
 - Follow up with the school if the bullying happens again or worsens.
- If the bullying does not stop after the first meeting
 - Make a meeting with the school principal.
 - Explain what was discussed in the first meeting and the agreed upon plan.
 - Ask what you can expect from the school in regards to stopping the bullying and helping your daughter.

OTHER RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

If the bullying is continuing to happen or you are receiving little or no help from the school. Always request a copy of the school's Student Handbook. Know the schools policies and rules for bullying, harassment and intimidation.

LOCAL LEVELS

Keep talking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tell as many people as possible that may be of some help to you and your daughter. ○ Talk to other parents. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Find out from your daughter if there have been other victims of the same bully(s). ○ Contact those parents and ask what they have done to stop the bullying. ○ Ask to form a group and work together to involve the school in the problem. ○ Talk to other parents who are willing to listen. ○ Go to PTO/PTA meetings as often as possible and make bullying a topic of discussion. ○ Go to school board meetings and voice your opinions and concerns.
Request meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Request a face-to-face meeting with the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Principal ○ Compliance officer (civil liberties) ○ Superintendent ○ Board of education members
Make Complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Make a complaint with the local school district: Visit the local school district website and fill out a complaint form. If they are not listed on the website call the local office and request one.
Local Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contact the local media about the problem such as newspapers, talk radio stations or the local news.

STATE AND FEDERAL LEVELS

- **Read up on and become acquainted with state and federal laws on bullying, harassment and intimidation.**
 - Visit StopBullying.gov for the most updated information on anti-bullying laws in your state.
- **If the school has not responded or is not following through, contact your State Department of Education:**
 - Find out your rights.
 - Make a complaint.
 - Find out the next steps or actions you can take.
- **If the school is not adequately addressing harassment or bullying based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability or religion:**
 - Contact The State Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights.
 - (Taken directly from www.ed.gov)
 - *The mission of the Office for Civil Rights is to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the nation through vigorous enforcement of civil rights.*

My child is being bullied in school. How can you help?

In general, policies for handling bullying are developed at the local and state level, as are policies on [discipline and school safety](#) and [most other issues](#). For information on these policies and what assistance may be available to you, please contact your [school district](#) or [state department of education](#).

Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education oversees federal legislation under the unsafe school choice option as well as anti-discrimination laws.

1. Depending upon the severity of the bullying, it is possible that the behavior may trigger the [unsafe school choice option](#) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, reauthorized as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), which allows a student to be transferred if he or she attends a persistently unsafe school, or is subject to a violent attack.
2. Student bullying may [violate anti-discrimination laws](#). Our Office for Civil Rights has provided guidance to school officials alerting them of their legal obligations to protect students from student-on-student harassment, including harassment based on race/national origin, sexual and gender-based harassment and disability harassment.

To file a [complaint of discrimination](#), please contact our Office for Civil Rights.

- Contact The U.S. Department of Education.
(Take directly from www.justice.gov)

Educational Opportunities

The Educational Opportunities Section enforces federal laws that protect students from harassment or discrimination. The Section is responsible for enforcing Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, and religion in public schools and institutions of higher learning; the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 which, among other things, requires states and school districts to provide English Language Learner (ELL) students with appropriate services to overcome language barriers; and the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits disability discrimination. The Section also plays a significant role in enforcing Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin by recipients of federal funds); Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 (prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex by recipients of federal funds); and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (both of which address disability discrimination and appropriate disability-related services).

The Educational Opportunities Section accepts complaints of potential violations:

- By e-mail to education@usdoj.gov
- By telephone at (202) 514-4092 or 1-877-292-3804 (toll-free)
- By facsimile at (202) 514-8337
- By letter to the following address:

U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Educational Opportunities Section, PHB
Washington, D.C. 20530

In order to properly respond to a complaint, the Section requests that complainants provide their name, address, and the name of the school/school district/university where the alleged discrimination occurred. Additional information regarding how to file a complaint is available [here](#).

Chapter 6: What if My Child is the Bully?

Knowing how to talk to your daughter about why she is bullying others can help put an end to these behaviors.

Finding out that your daughter is or might be a bully can be just as hard as hearing she is a victim of bullying. But it is important to put a stop to these behaviors because they can have lasting effects on your daughter.

STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS

Stay calm

- It is normal to feel defensive or angry at those pointing a finger at your child, but becoming overly angry or upset will make the situation worse for you and her.
- Showing strong emotions will upset your daughter and she may become angry or defensive toward you.
- Becoming angry at other parents or your daughter's school may cause you to lose vital resources that are willing to help your daughter.
- Read Chapter 3 on page 10 to learn more about controlling your own emotions.

View the situation objectively

- This will help you determine how serious the situation is.
- Your daughter may not tell you the whole story the first time or may hold back information that puts her in a negative light.

Take the problem seriously

- It is important not to make excuses, deny, or overlook the problem.
- The problem is not going to go away on its own.

- If your child is bullying her peers, most likely there are other problems she is dealing with. Try talking to her about how things are going at school or with her friends. If you open the lines of communication, she may be more open to telling you if she is having problems.

It can be tough to have the patience and understanding to help your daughter. It takes communication, asking for help from others and continuous work. But it is important to help her because she is not only hurting others but she is hurting herself as well. Children and teens who bully others:

- Are at increased risk for engaging in other anti-social or criminal behaviors in the future, even into adulthood.
- Tend to struggle in school and in other social situations.
- Tend to be unwilling to accept responsibility for things other than the bullying.
- Lack empathy and guilt.
- Want or need to feel in control.
- Are unsure of how to handle feelings of anger or sadness.

Most importantly, if your daughter is bullying others, there is a reason. These could include being depressed, anxious, or other mental health issues.

Parents, before reading over the following guidelines for helping your daughter, download and read “If You Think You are a Bully (PDF)” on Girls Guide to End Bullying. This PDF can be found in any of the “Bring it Together” sections. This will give you a better understanding of how The Girls Guide approaches bullying behaviors.

STEPS TO TAKE TO HELP YOUR DAUGHTER

- Talk to her.
- Find out why she is doing it.
- Help her change her behaviors.

Talk to her. Help your daughter open up about what is going on.

- Do not talk if either of you are upset. This will most likely cause an argument. As a parent, when you yell or become upset, you lose control of yourself and the conversation.
- Do not blame or put her down. At this point it is not about right or wrong - it is about opening the lines of communication. If you blame or put her down, she will shut down too.
- Express that although you do not condone her actions, you love her and support her and want to help her.
- Ask her questions like “*Can you tell me what happened?*”. Do not ask questions like “*Why did you do that?*”
- Listen carefully and stay objective.
- If your daughter is willing to talk, let her tell the story without interruption or showing emotion. You may find this new line of communication with her may be painful at first, but it is important to understanding and learning about why she is bullying other students.
- If she does not want to talk:
 - Encourage her to talk to someone else she is close with like a cousin, aunt, close family friend or a teacher.
 - Try having the conversation a little later.

Find out why she is bullying others

- *Although you may not know the whole story right away, if you know some of the negative behaviors she is exhibiting it is important to find out why.*
- *Ask her questions like:*
 - “When you are _____ how do you feel?”
 - “What are you thinking when you _____?”
 - “What happens right before you _____?”
 - “Do you know why you are _____?”
 - “Is there anything bothering you or stressing you out?”
- *Girls bully for many reasons but here are some of the major ones:*
 - Having problems at home
 - Has there been stress at home such as changes, divorce, new addition to the family, fighting between you and your spouse, income change, moving?
 - Even something that might seem small to you can have a major impact on your daughter and she may be taking her feelings out on others.
 - She has been bullied
 - Often girls switch roles from bully to bystander to victim. So they may be bullying others because they themselves were targeted.
 - It can be difficult for parents to hear their daughter is being bullied. Read Chapter 4 on page 12 on how to talk to your daughter if she has been bullied.
 - Even though she may have also been bullied, it is important to focus on her present negative behaviors, no matter why she did it.

- Her own group of friends
 - Often girls are part of groups that encourage bullying of other students and members of their own group.
 - Your daughter may feel like she has to portray a certain image to stay within the group of friends.
 - In groups like this, motives behind the bullying are to move up the hierarchy ladder. Girls may feel the only way to stay in the group is to push others out by bullying them.
- Depression, anxiety, loneliness or low-self esteem
 - It is a very real possibility that your daughter is dealing with depression or anxiety.
 - Girls who are depressed bully other students because they feel a sense of hopelessness or helplessness.
 - It is important to understand that these types of mental health problems in teens and children do not present themselves in the same way as adults. There can be a tremendous amount of variety in the way it manifests.
- Seeking attention or jealous of other students
 - Every day girls face the onslaught of how they should look, dress, walk, and talk.
 - They often base their self-worth on what others think of them, whether they are wearing the newest fashion or have the newest haircut.
 - This can take a toll on their self-esteem and if they feel like they are not stacking up they may become jealous of other students and seek attention in other ways.
 - In turn, they bully others as a way to feel in control and diminish their victim.

- Unable to control negative feelings such as anger and frustration or not sure how to resolve conflict
 - Often bullying is a result of a conflict that your daughter was unable to solve in a positive way.
 - Many girls are not sure how to express emotion, especially anger.
 - When they are mad at another peer, instead of using conflict resolution skills, they bully the individual.
 - Use our Conflict Resolution form in the Appendix on page 55 to help her learn how to manage conflict better.

Extra tip for parents:

Talk to her school: Contacting her school is important for several reasons.

- You may find out more information about your child's behavior.
- They may be able to provide other insight into why your child may be bullying other students,
- The school can work with you to help monitor the situation.

Help her understand and change her behaviors.

- *It is important that no matter WHY she is bullying others, you hold her responsible for her actions*
 - Tell her what she is doing is bullying. Make sure she understands why.
 - Tell her you will not tolerate this type of behavior and mistreatment of others.
 - Help your daughter understand that it is not okay to value or use aggression and can cause problems for her long term.

- *Promote empathy*
 - Many students who bully others actually find that their peers reward them by moving up in social status. Often times though, they know what they are doing is wrong but they don't understand or see how their behavior affects others.
 - It is important that your daughter sees and understand how her actions affect those around her.

- *Use Girls Guide to End Bullying*
 - Read through the “**After the Bullying**” sections on The Girls Guide. This will help her understand the bullying from the victim's point of view.

- *Watch movies with them that help them see the consequences of bullying*
 - *The Bully Project*
 - *Bully*
 - *Respect All*
 - *Bully Dance*
 - *Stories of Us*

- *Talk to your daughter*
 - Talk about how she would feel if she was the victim.
 - If she been bullied before, how did she feel?
 - Talk about exactly how she thinks her victim probably felt at the time of the bullying, after and now.
 - Ask her how the outcome of the situation could have changed had she not bullied someone else.

- Work on controlling negative feelings and using conflict resolution skills.
 - Help your daughter recognize and express her feelings in a less damaging way.
 - Negative feelings such as anger and frustration are normal but what is not okay is taking this anger out on others through bullying.
 - Let her know that she can learn to manage it and not let it manage her.
 - For example: If your daughter and her friend get into an argument, she probably feels angry and upset. The anger and frustration is what she is feeling, and this is okay. In response to these feelings, she spreads a nasty rumor about her friend and goes onto Twitter and makes negative comments about her friend. This is her bullying action, which is not okay. This was a choice, but not the appropriate response. She did not handle her feelings in a constructive way.
 - If your teen can learn to recognize when she is feeling frustrated or angry, then she is more able to manage these feelings. Help her understand or know the signs of anger or frustration.
 - Feeling tense, anxious or unsure.
 - Crying.
 - Withdrawing from friends or family.
 - Crossing her arms, clenching her fists and frowning.
 - Having an uneasy stomach or her head feels “full”.
 - Talk about how she feels when she becomes angry.
 - Give her ways of dealing with this anger.
 - Avoid situations that make her feel this way.
 - Think about the friendships she is in. Are they healthy? **Read How to be a better friend (PDF)** which is found in any “Bring it Together” sections.

- Also read the PDF **What to do if you think your friendship is ending** to think about the friendships she has. This is found in the Appendix on page 56.
- Exercising can help get rid of built up energy and negative feelings.
- Practice anger management techniques.
 - a. Read **Learn about controlling emotions PDF**, Found in the appendix on page 57.
- Write
 - a. Get her a journal or diary.
 - b. Encourage her to write her feelings down. Ensure her that you will honor her privacy and not read her journal.
 - c. Writing about problems and situations that make her upset can help her think more logically about actions and behaviors.
- *Spend more time together*
 - If your daughter is bullying other students, she may need extra support. Spending one-on-one time together can be a good way to show her you love and support her.
 - Spending extra time together can also help open the lines of communication between the two of you.
- *Give her opportunities to affect people in a positive way.*
 - Becoming a Big Sister in her community.
 - Volunteering at a nursing home.
- *Seeing a counselor or a psychologist.*
 - If you think your daughter is dealing with depression or anxiety or think she might benefit from just talking to someone other than you, it might be best to have her talk to a counselor or psychologist.

- If you treat the underlying problems such as depression, anxiety, aggression the bullying can be stopped.
- Help your daughter understand this is not a form of punishment. It is okay if she has an attitude about it. The first and hardest and most important step is just getting her to go.

Parents, it is important that you have realistic expectations. It will take time for your daughter to change her behaviors. It is important that you create an environment where she feels safe and loved, yet continue to let her know that negative behaviors such as bullying will not be tolerated.

Chapter 7: From Bystander to Taking a Stand

It is important to encourage your daughter to take a positive stand against bullying.

As a parent you want your child to do the right thing when they see someone being bullied. Often though, children and teens are passive bystanders to the bullying and aggression of their peers. In a recent study, 80% of bullying happened in front of other students and only 6% involved someone intervening to stop the bullying.

If parents are able to:

- Help their children become aware of the bystander role
- Teach them the impact of each of their actions and decisions
- Teach them what to do to stand up to bullying and support the victim

There is a greater chance they will be empowered to take an active role in preventing bullying inside and outside of their school.

This is important because:

- Bystanders witness the majority of bullying while teachers, coaches, group leaders, and parents, do not.
- Most incidences of bullying happen because the bully is trying to gain status in the peer group. If bystanders do not reward the bully in this way, the bullying stops.
- Bullies will be less likely to bully when they think their peers will stand up to them.
- When bystanders decide to act, reporting of bullying increases.
- Victims who are supported by bystanders report they are less rejected by peers, less depressed, and feel more confident about handling bullying on their own in the future.

Teaching your daughter to be an upstander and not just a bystander can increase her own self-worth too.

- Those who stand up for victims of bullying are:
 - Viewed as more popular, friendlier and happier.
 - More likely to be the recipient of prosocial acts from peers. In other words, people will be more willing to help them out in the future.
 - Less likely to be targets of bullying in the future.

WHAT EXACTLY IS A BYSTANDER?

A bystander is anyone who witnesses bullying or hears about it.

Many students, educators and parents may know what a bystander is, but most do not know that bystanders play a role in the bullying. There is no neutral role in bullying; either you are supporting the bullying or you are standing up to it.

Some ways bystanders support bullying are:

- Laughing.
- Pointing.
- Passing a rumor.

When bystanders do nothing to stop the bullying:

- The bully thinks, *"You agree with my actions."*
- The victim thinks, *"You feel the same way as the bully."*
- The other bystanders think, *"If you are not standing up to the bully, I am not going to either."*

Why don't bystanders intervene?

- They are scared or worried about becoming the next target.
- They think everyone else agrees with the bully.
- They don't know what to do to help the victim.
- They don't realize the action is bullying.
- They benefit in some way from the bullying.

WHAT CAN I DO?

It is important to teach your teen to be socially responsible. This includes standing up for and supporting victims of bullying.

Here are some general guidelines to follow when talking with your daughter:

- **Support:** Your daughter is not going to take action against bullying if they do not feel supported by you. Be clear on your stand about being a bystander. Make sure she knows how you feel about bullying, that you don't approve, and that you hope she will take a stand against it too.
- **Understand:** There are risks involved with standing up to a bully. Reduce this risk by being open about bystanders, the actions they should take and your support for this. Let her know that there are always things she can do that do not involve confronting the bully.
- **Positives:** Accentuate the positives rather than the negatives. The conversations you have about being a bystander and bullying in general do not have to focus on the negatives. Try to help her see the positives to standing up to bullying, such as how much better it will make her feel or the positive impact it will have on the victim.

- **Educate:** The Girls Guide can be used to increase bystander actions against bullying. The sections “**After the bullying**” and “**If you see bullying happening**” in The Girls Guide cover this information. The following are general principles that are reinforced:
 - Make girls aware of what a bystander is and how their own behaviors toward bullying can encourage or discourage the bullying.
 - Help them take responsibility for their actions and help them realize they should intervene and support the victim.
 - Teach girls skills and strategies they can use to intervene or help the victim when they see or hear about bullying.

Once you have been through Girls Guide to End Bullying with your daughter, you can use the following tips, discussion points and activities with her.

Role Play

- Help your daughter come up with different responses to different situations.
- Role play with your daughter so she can practice her responses.

Discussion Points

Use these discussions topics as starting points for talking to your daughter about being a bystander. Not all conversations about bullying have to be hour-long lectures. Talk with your daughter in the car or after dinner. Keeping the lines of communication open with her will help reinforce that you support her standing up to bullying. These Discussion Points and Activities can be found throughout the Lesson Plans.

- Taking a stand against bullying has a positive impact on everyone. Can you think of ways you help the victim and yourself?
 - *When a victim is supported or defended they are:*
 - *More liked by their peers.*
 - *Less depressed.*

- *Have higher self-esteem.*
- *Are happier.*
- *Bystanders help themselves by:*
 - *Being viewed as more popular, friendlier, and happier.*
 - *Standing up for what they believe in.*
 - *Building their confidence.*
 - *Being less likely to be bullied since bullies often target people who are submissive and weak.*

- *Why do you think that when bystanders intervene in bullying it usually stops within 10 seconds?*
 - *It takes the power away from the bully.*
 - *When the bully realizes that the victim has support from other students they are much less likely to continue bullying them.*

- *What can you do if you don't feel safe telling the bully to stop?*
 - *That is okay. You do not have to put yourself in a dangerous situation.*
 - *Support the victim after they have been bullied.*
 - *Ask the victim if they are okay.*
 - *Offer to go with them to talk to an adult, etc.*

- *When are there times that reporting bullying is important?*
 - *If the victim is in danger.*
 - *If the victim has talked about hurting themselves or someone else.*
 - *If the victim is failing classes, has expressed they cannot eat or sleep, or they are starting to have problems at home.*

- What effects does relational bullying have on bystanders when they DON'T stand up to it?
 - *"If I don't say anything my friends won't be mad at me."*
 - *Truth: if your friends are bullying someone, they will or probably have done it to you.*
 - *It's not about who is mad at who. It is about who the group decides to make their target that day.*
 - *"If I go along with this and ignore the victim too, my friends will like me more."*
 - *Truth: This actually has a negative effect on how the others view you.*
 - *If the girls see that you are not willing to stand up for the victim or to the bully, they may make you do the dirty work in the future, such as playing messenger or helping to spread a rumor.*
 - *Nothing is for sure. The girl they are bullying will most likely be accepted back into the group. Now the victim will have lost trust in you and the other girls.*
 - *You can choose to say something and the group will see you are not an easy target, or you can choose to not say anything and you could be the next target.*

- What are some reasons why girls do not stand up to relational bullying? Why are these reasons bad?
 - *Reasons:*
 - *You are afraid of becoming the next target.*
 - *Maybe you think you benefit in some way from the bullying, such as moving up in status if the victim is kicked out of the group.*
 - *You don't want everyone to be mad at you.*
 - *You are actually entertained by it.*
 - *No one deserves to be bullied. Girls use relational aggression to control and hurt other girls. This is not healthy and if you are not standing up to bullying you are taking part in it.*

- What are some good ways to handle rumors when you hear them?
 - *Do not spread them.*
 - *Tell the person who told you the rumor that it is none of their business or say, "Who cares?"*
 - *Ask the victim if she is okay. Tell her you do not believe the rumor and that you are sorry this is happening.*
 - *When you hear the rumor, instead of spreading it, say something nice about the victim.*

- Many students think that if they hear about bullying but don't see it, they aren't playing a role in it. Why is this not true?
 - *A bystander is anyone who sees or HEARS about bullying but does not participate in it.*
 - *If you hear about bullying and do nothing about it, you are still showing support for the bullying because you are not taking a stand against it.*

- Think about the differences between how a victim feels after they have been bullied and no one stands up for her versus someone standing up for her and comforting her.
 - *If no one stands up for her she probably feels:*
 - *Sad.*
 - *Upset.*
 - *Depressed.*
 - *Like everyone hates her or feels the same way as the bully does.*
 - *Helpless.*
 - *Alone.*

- *If someone stands up for her or comforts her she:*
 - *Feels supported.*
 - *Feels Less depressed.*
 - *Has higher self-esteem.*
 - *Feels like she can handle the bullying situation better.*

Activities

The activities can be found in the back of the indicated Lesson Plan.

- Bystander Quiz: This activity will help students think about the bystander role and how being a bystander can encourage or discourage the bullying. (Physical Bullying Lesson Plan)
- I Play a Role: This activity will help students think about a time they witnessed bullying, the role they played, and what they can do next time they see it. (Any of the Lesson Plans)
- What's Your Opinion? This activity will help students think about issues bystanders face when they see bullying, why they decide to help, and the best way to help a victim. (Verbal Lesson Plan)
- Making Assumptions: This activity helps students think about the assumptions they make about people and how this affects their judgment of why people are bullied. (Verbal Lesson Plan)
- A Bucket of Sand: This activity will help students think about how powerful a rumor can be and how hard it is to undo the damage rumors cause. (Relational Lesson Plan)
- Different Perspectives: This activity will help students understand the different perspectives bystanders have to relational bullying and how they can react to each one. (Relational Lesson Plan)

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR DAUGHTER WITNESSED BULLYING

- If she stood up to the bullying or supported and helped the victim, let her know that you are proud of her and that she made the right choice.
- If she witnessed bullying and did nothing to stop it use the questions below as guidelines to help her understand that the choices she made had a negative impact on the situation.
 1. Does she understand what she witnessed was bullying?
 - If she does not, explain to her why the behavior is considered bullying.
 2. What actions did she take?
 - Was the response helpful, such as helping the victim or confronting the bully?
 - Be sure to reinforce to your daughter that you are proud of her for making the right choice.
 - Was the response hurtful, such as laughing, staring, pointing or spreading a rumor?
 - Convey that these behaviors reinforce the bully and suggest to the victim that the bystander agrees with what happened.
 3. Why did she choose to not help the victim?
 - Express that as a bystander, she has the choice to help end bullying in her school.
 - She may give you reasons such as being afraid of being kicked out of the group, afraid of becoming the next victim, or afraid of being called a snitch.
 - Help her understand that there are ways she can help a victim without confronting the group or the bully.

4. What effects does the action of doing nothing have on the **bully**?
 - Help her understand that by doing nothing she is telling the bully that she agrees and supports the bully's actions.

5. What effect does the action of doing nothing have on the **victim**?
 - Help her develop some level of empathy for the victim.
 - Help her understand that the victim may have felt bad, that no one likes them, or damaged their self-esteem.

6. What effect does the action of doing nothing have on you as the **bystander** and the others around you?
 - Help her understand that seeing bullying and doing nothing about it has effects on them.
 - Witnessing bullying can:
 - Make you feel afraid, stressed, scared to go to school, and even depressed.
 - Desensitize her to the negative actions of others which in turn may make her think bullying is acceptable.
 - They may actually start to imitate the bully or admire the bully for their mean and negative actions.
 - Bystanders' self-respect and self-confidence can be worn by not standing up for victims of bullying or by encouraging the bullying.
 - Because they are friends with the bully it is easy to become caught up in the drama.
 - They may lose good friendships at the sake of going along with what the bully is doing.

7. What can she do differently next time to help the victim?
 - The bystander may express that she is scared of being kicked out of her group or afraid of standing up to the bully.

- Discuss with her that there are ways to help a victim without confronting the bully or the group.
- Help her come up with ideas, such as:
 - Asking the victim if they are okay.
 - Calling or texting the victim, writing them a note, or posting something nice about them online.
 - Tell the victim you are sorry that happened.

Encourage her to use www.GirlsGuidetoEndBullying.org to come up with more ideas.

APPENDIX

CONFLICT RESOLUTION FORM

If you believe the incident is a result of a disagreement or a misunderstanding, explain to the daughter why you think this is a conflict and go over this form with her. This will help her understand what might have happened and how she can resolve the conflict. When going over this form, avoid side issues and focus on the conflict and how to solve it.

1. What happened?

2. What is the conflict from **your** point of view? What actions did **you** take to make the situation worse? What actions did **you** take to make it better?

3. What do you think the conflict is, from the **other person's** point of view? What actions did **they** take to make the situation worse? What actions did **they** take to make it better?

4. What do you want, need or think should happen?

5. List 5 actions you can take to resolve the conflict.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

IF YOU THINK YOUR FRIENDSHIP MIGHT BE ENDING

It is painful to realize that your friendship may be ending. This could mean that not only is your friendship ending with one girl, but it could be ending with a whole group.

It may have been a long time since you have had a healthy friendship so ask yourself these questions about your friendships:

- Are you more interested in being in a clique or group of girls who bully you or are you more interested in healthy respectful friendships?
- Do you often feel manipulated or feel like they do not care about you?
- Do they make you feel bad about yourself and the choices you make?
- Do they pressure you to do things, like talk to boys, or spread gossip about others, and if you don't do these things do they threaten to get mad at you?
- Do you want to have others control what you do?
- Do you want your friends to verbally disrespect you and harass you?

Determine where you draw the line. You may be better off without these girls:

1. If the friendship is ending, stay away from the group.
2. Do not hang out where they are.
3. For a short period of time, find something you can do at lunch time, such as work in the art room, help tutor other students, or be a teacher's aide.
4. Try to make new friends. Accept that this could mean being friends with girls who are less popular.
 - a. Having a supportive network of friends will help you feel better and boost your self-confidence.
5. This group has probably had other casualties. Even if you were part of the problem, seek out friendships with the girls who have also been victims.
6. If they want to be friends again:
 - a. Learn from the past.
 - b. Take baby steps.
 - c. Ask for an apology.
 - d. Express your feelings about the situation but do not brood.
7. Continue to try to make friends outside of the group.

HOW TO CONTROL YOUR EMOTIONS

The bully is doing this because most likely they want a reaction out of you.

Learning to handle your emotions can be the first step in dealing with and ending the cycle of bullying.

This is the most important things to remember:

1. Do not blame yourself. No one, no matter what, deserves to be bullied or put down.
2. Do not respond to the bully in an aggressive or confrontational manner.

Use the following techniques to help keep your anger or upset feelings in check.

How can I keep from showing that I am upset?

The first thing you need to remember to do is breathe

3. Breathe in and out, slowly, imagine that you are breathing out all of those negative feelings that you are experiencing. Try practicing some different breathing exercises so you know what to do or what you like best.

Do not act on those immediate emotions

Thinking about your breathing will be your first defense, but you will need to try some of these other tips to help keep from showing your feelings.

4. You can leave/ignore/runaway/walk away from the situation – this is helpful in one time cases or when you are being physically bullied.
 - a. Try and imagine you are walking away from a friend. This can be a way of making sure your body language (which you are usually unaware of) doesn't give away a sense of fear.

5. Concentrate on something else and ignore the bully
 - a. Try thinking about what you are doing this weekend
 - b. Count to 100 or backwards from 100

6. Build a wall around you
 - a. Do this in your mind. Build an invisible wall around you that keeps your emotions in and the hurt out.
 - b. Imagine any verbal abuse bouncing off the wall.

7. Use visualization
 - a. Picture the bully doing something funny. This may help the situation seem less threatening.
 - b. Picture the bully (if a boy) in women's clothes, or picture their head shrinking.

8. Stay positive
 - a. It can be hard to do this when the bully is being so negative, but try to remember all of the things you do well.

9. Think about how bad the bully must feel
 - a. If they are doing something like this to you, they are probably feeling pretty bad about themselves or something else may be going on that you do not know about.

10. Use positive self-talk
 - a. "I am better than that."
 - b. "I am not like that."
 - c. "I don't have to pick on other people to know I am good."