

Bullying Prevention Strategies for Adults

Bullying can affect anyone, including youth, adults and seniors in any environment such as schools, workplaces and community spaces. No one has to tolerate bullying. It can be prevented. The best way to prevent bullying is to promote healthy, supportive relationships.

50% of youth have been bullied at school.

20% of youth have been bullied while playing sports.

45% of adults have been bullied at work.

20% of seniors have been bullied in community space.

What is bullying?

Bullying is any repeated, hostile or demeaning behaviour intended to cause harm, fear or distress, including physical or psychological harm.

For an action to be considered bullying, it needs to involve:

- Intent: the actions happen on purpose
- Harm: the recipient is hurt by the action
- Repetition: the recipient is repeatedly targeted

Bullying can be:

- Verbal: name calling, put downs, threats.
- Social/Relational: exclusion, gossiping, ganging-up.
- Physical: hitting, pushing, slapping.

Bullying is not a discipline problem, it's a relationship problem.

Bullying creates fear and threatens the safety and well-being of individuals, families and society as a whole. To end bullying, we need to work together to promote healthy relationships by demonstrating trust, empathy, honesty and respect.

How to tell if someone is experiencing bullying

People don't always speak up when they're being bullied because they might be embarrassed, uncertain how to proceed or afraid of the consequences of coming forward. People sometimes believe they must remain silent in order to belong. The person's behaviour may be a clue to bullying even before they are willing to talk about it.

Bullying is hurtful and harmful. It is NOT normal and should not be tolerated.

Warning signs

- Increased absences from school, work or community events
- Becoming disengaged in school, work or hobbies
- Some children and youth may “lose” belongings, come home with belongings destroyed or have unexplained cuts or bruises
- Becoming withdrawn, increased agitation and irritability
- Displaying mental health issues such as depression or anxiety

Everyone has a role to play in making our communities, homes and schools hopeful and happy places to be.

What you can do

If you suspect a person is being bullied, ask them directly. If the answer is yes, here are six ways you can help immediately:

- 1) **Offer support** - Let them know you are there to support them.
- 2) **Work together** - Work within the system. Parents should work with schools to ensure the issues is monitored and dealt with. Employees should work with colleagues, supervisors and HR to ensure there are policies in place and that they are followed. Seniors should work with program staff if they are bullied in community spaces or in their residence.
- 3) **Make arrangements for safety** - Ensure that people experiencing bullying feel safe and that the situation is not escalating to violence. Continue to provide support to the individual so they are not isolated.
- 4) **Promote healthy relationships by encouraging empathy, kindness, honesty and respect** - Healthy relationships give people tools to resolve conflict, regulate their emotions and manage stress. This can increase resiliency making people less likely to be involved with bullying.
- 5) **Practice effective responses** - Increase awareness and education about preventing bullying and promoting healthy relationships to ensure that people know how to respond if they experience or witness bullying.
- 6) **Communicate** - Increase communication to create an open and supportive environment where people feel comfortable to discuss issues.

For more information about bullying, visit alberta.ca/bullying