


Bullying – what can I do?

Supporting notes for facilitators

 Play video

 Pause video

This video is designed to be used as a tool to promote discussion. It aims to raise awareness with children and young people about bullying and what they can do if it is happening to them or someone they know.

The key message from this resource, and subsequent discussions, is that there is no single answer or any one piece of advice you can give that will always work when responding to bullying. We need to be able to explore what our options are and consider what might work best for individuals.


As well as the script used in the video we have developed additional guidance which you can use to facilitate and widen discussions. There are no right or wrong answers, it's about giving children and young people the confidence to think about their options and consider, 'what might work for me?'

Introduce the video as '*a resource that is designed to make you think about what bullying is and what you can do if it's happening to you or someone you know*'

Show the full video first before the discussion.

Ask the children and young people for their initial thoughts on what they have watched. Depending on their age and stage it is important to let them lead the discussions and go back to the video prompted by questions such as:

- *Do you feel you have choices when responding to other people's behaviour?*
- *Are people clear on what we mean by bullying?*
- *Is it better to think about what choices you might have than just one option?*
- *Is this realistic?*
- *What makes some things harder than others to do?*
- *What do think is bad advice?*



Alternatively, you can simply use the video again to generate discussions in a more structured manner, by showing it in stages, pausing after each option is discussed. The script is in italics.

After each option, ask *'what are the positives and negatives of this option?'*
'Under what circumstances might it work?' *'When might it not work or be unhelpful?'*

The purpose of the discussion is to discover that some things will work for some people, but won't work for others, while also recognising that they might work under some circumstances but not others.

Ideally, you want to illustrate that when we are being bullied (or someone we know is being bullied) we should consider the individual circumstances and what might work best in that situation.

respectme's research highlighted that children and young people value choices and want to be able to choose actions that make them feel better and help them to cope, as well as things that are more likely to make the bullying stop. Both are relevant.

As adults we need to be able to explore these options with children and young people. This can help restore their confidence and agency and helps them learn how to manage difficulties, express themselves and problem solve.





If you're being provoked, laughed at, left out, or frightened; made to feel you've no options, no control, no power: that's bullying.

Bullying can happen to anyone - him... any one or even all of them... Even her.

So how do you get back that feeling of being in control?

How can you be your old, smiley - scrap that you were never that smiley - sorta smiley self again. Or help a friend who's struggling?





Well, the good news is that you do have options. Some might be more appealing (mmm, like this one) than others. (Eh, not so much!)



Ask children and young people if they are clear on the definition, that bullying is both what someone did and the impact it had.

Additional Notes:

Bullying is both behaviour and impact; the impact on a person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. This is what we term as their sense of 'agency'. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships; it is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out. This behaviour happens face to face and online. Young people are still more likely to be bullied face to face than online – although online bullying is very visible and public, it is not as prevalent as face to face bullying.

Our agency is our ability to make choices and our capacity to take effective action. Bullying strips us of this ability and affects how we manage and feel about ourselves.

Bullying behaviour can harm physically or emotionally and, although the actual behaviour may not be repeated, the threat may be sustained over time, typically by actions: looks, messages, confrontations, physical interventions or the fear of these.

When dealing with bullying, we should focus on the behaviour and the impact it has, not labeling children as 'bullies'. When we talk about bullying we talk about a person's behaviour; what they did, not who they are. An example of this would be, 'when you said/did that to Michael, that was bullying'.





You could ignore it.

Even if it's bothering you, pretend it doesn't. Act like you don't give a monkeys (eh that's actually an orangutan but you get the idea) and their actions and words could lose all power.

This might not work first time. Or second. Or third.

It might take what feels like forever (ouch!) to stop. And it can be pretty hard making out something's not bothering you when it is. It really, really is.



**Ask – Does this option make sense? When might this be a good option?
When might this option not work?**

Additional Notes:

Being able to walk away from bullying or act like it doesn't bother you is a good coping mechanism; it illustrates that young people are confident and can deal with situations. But it's not always easy for someone to pretend that they're okay when they're not. Even if they can hide their feelings, they're still there and they need to do be dealt with.

Walking away doesn't work so well when the bullying is happening at places young people enjoy going to, or places that they might *have* to go to – like school, a church or Mosque.

If they feel comfortable trying this then they should. But if it's not an option then they need to think about trying something else.



You could ask them to stop.

Maybe they've no idea they're upsetting you. So put them straight. Tell them how it feels... Then ask them to stop. If you think this might make things worse, this isn't for you.



**Ask – Does this option make sense? When might this be a good option?
When might this option not work?**

Additional Notes:

If a child or young person can do this then they should try it. The person bullying them might not know what impact their behaviour is having and it might change the way they behave. But some people aren't so approachable and some young people might not have the confidence to speak to them, or will be worried about what will happen if they do. If this might make things worse then it's best to explore another option.



You could have the last laugh.

If you're being bullied you could try turning the situation around by having a funny, clever comeback. But you need to be confident to try this, so weigh up the situation first. No-one likes to be embarrassed in front of others and it might make them react more strongly than they did before.



**Ask – Does this option make sense? When might this be a good option?
When might this option not work?**

Additional Notes:

Some people are witty and confident enough to respond to people who are bullying them with a clever comeback – but it's not something everyone will feel comfortable doing. Children and young people need to weigh up the situation and be prepared for a reaction. No one wants to be embarrassed in front of other people so it might make them react more aggressively than they did before. Try to judge whether this might make things worse before taking this approach.

If young people use this option online, they need to remember how easily comments can be misunderstood! Something that sounds funny or clever in their head might not come across that way online!




You could tell an adult

Maybe you could talk to your mum? Or how about your dad? Does that feel right for you? Or is that the worst idea ever?

Does the thought of that fill you with more fear than the bullying itself?

What if they over-react... and make the situation worse? Or get even more upset by it than you? Or total horror show! Folk find out and call you a grass?

It's okay to think telling an adult is not okay.



But think about it; maybe you only think that way because you haven't thought... of the right adult.

But telling the right adult could make all the difference.

It could be a parent or a grandparent or a teacher or a coach. It doesn't matter who they are, just that you trust them to do their best by you.

Or you could talk to someone you don't know – either online or on the phone.




**Ask – Does this option make sense? When might this be a good option?
When might this option not work?**


Additional Notes:

In most cases this is good advice. But does it feel right for every situation? Children and young people often don't want to worry or upset parents/carers and perhaps the biggest fear – that they'll overreact or create a fuss - can be a barrier to telling. Similarly, if they feel that their parent/carers or staff may be prejudiced about a situation this can stop them from talking too.

Be mindful that some young people may not live at home with parents – it useful to talk about 'your parents and the people who look after you'.

Some children and young people may believe telling an adult is a waste of time. But telling the right adult really *can* make a difference. We can ask children and young people to talk to someone they trust; a parent, teacher, brother or sister, football coach or a youth worker. It doesn't matter who they are, only that they trust them to do their best for them; to listen to what they want to happen and to keep them included. So ask, who do they think is the right person for them? Who do they trust and how would they go about talking to them? Telling an adult can help make bullying stop and has to go hand-in-hand with support for the person being bullied.





Remember: Children and young people value choices and need strategies that help them cope and manage behaviour as well as ones that are more likely to make bullying stop.



You could get your own back.

You could try giving them a taste of their own medicine.

But that could make them react even more aggressively than they did before.

Hitting back might be choice for some, but it might not be your thing. And it's high risk. You could end up even more hurt. Or if you hurt them you could get charged with assault. Same goes for online bullying. Online messages and texts can all be traced. (Granted, maybe not by her).




**Ask – Does this option make sense? When might this be a good option?
When might this option not work?**

Additional Notes:

Children and young people tell us that this is a common piece of advice, but it isn't always helpful! It takes a lot of courage to confront someone who is making you feel intimidated, scared, sad or lonely. Violence can leave you and others badly hurt, or in serious trouble, and it can make people feel bad about themselves. If someone uses violence towards another, this could be an assault – not bullying – and it may involve the police. Hitting back *is* a choice for some people, but it's a risky one. Remember, if you hit someone back *you* could be charged with assault.





Despite what people often think, responding to bullying with more bullying doesn't make it go away.



You could keep a diary.

Is keeping a diary your kinda thing? It could be completely personal. Or you could share it with the world.

Writing things down can help you get everything out and provides a log of what took place when, should you wish to report it.



Ask – Does this option make sense? When might this be a good option? When might this option not work?


Additional Notes:


Keeping a diary doesn't suit everyone, but writing things down can be a really useful way of coping with how you're feeling; especially if you aren't ready to talk to someone about it. This only really works if people like writing things down or are already quite reflective. This goes for video blogs too – some people enjoy this way of sharing how they feel – but it is not for everyone.



Find a way of dealing with your feelings.

Go on, let rip! Try music. Art. Sport. Any kinda sport to let all those pent up feelings run free. Way to go! It can help you feel better. Ahhhh. Much better.





So there you have it in a nutshell: Options. You might try one (did I mention I'd have this one, lots and lots and lots of this one)... or some...or all of them.

They might work first time... Or sometimes... or not at all and you have to try something else. Point is, you've plenty to choose from.

Have a think about the options you want to use so you can be, well, you, again.



Ask – Does this make sense? What coping mechanisms might be helpful? Which methods might not work so well?

Additional Notes to support discussion:

Some people can 'bounce back' from bullying, but for others their feelings will be harder to deal with.

Some coping methods are better than others. Talking to friends or family, doing things you love, listening to music, playing games and staying active are all positive things that can be done. They won't always make the bullying stop, but they can help people manage how they're feeling. Just being listened to can help children and young people feel better, more supported and less alone; just as listening to friends can help them feel better.

Arguing, taking out anger on others, doing things to hurt themselves, missing school, drinking or smoking, or stopping communicating with people may seem like ways to cope, but they are not healthy; they don't deal with the bullying or how it makes you feel.

If an individual does not feel there is anyone they can talk to, or anyone they can be themselves around, it might help to look for places locally or online, such as groups for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people, groups for young people with a disability, groups of young people who care for sick parents, or other groups that they feel represent *them*.





Further options that are worth considering:

Tell a friend

This is a popular option to explore. We must talk to all young people about bullying, even if it's not something they're experiencing, so they're in a position to help friends if they need to talk about it. Not bottling things up and knowing they can talk to you or another adult, or consider which one of their friends or peers they might want to talk to instead, can all help.

If they don't feel comfortable talking to someone they know but you think it'll help to tell *someone*, they can call ChildLine (0800 1111) or go online (www.childline.org.uk) and speak to someone in confidence.

Block/report users online

If the bullying is happening online, you can instantly 'block' someone or delete or 'hide' what they say, even though that won't stop other people from seeing it. There are also steps you can take on social media sites, such as Facebook, where you can report language or behaviour which is offensive or aggressive.

Often 'blocking' someone is enough and people don't feel the need to report them but, again, everyone is different and it will depend on their situation and what will make them feel better. There also exists the very real 'unwritten rule' that blocking is not an option – it is not something you 'do' and the consequences for doing so can be worrying and public.

Remember: online is *where* the bullying happens, it is not *what* happens.





Information to support discussions on Prejudice-Based Bullying

Children and young people may experience bullying because others are prejudiced towards where they live, their sexual orientation, gender, disability, the colour of their skin, what clothes they wear or what team they support.

The one thing that these have in common is difference or perceived difference - some children and young people don't see or understand diversity, they still only see difference.


The Equality Act 2010 sets out that it is unlawful to discriminate against a person due to the following personal characteristics -


- age
- being or becoming a transsexual person
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or having a child
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Based on the historical prejudice and discrimination experienced by people who have, or are perceived to have, these characteristics, they now warrant special protection under the law to address the inequality they have experienced. These characteristics are protected and as such are referred to as The Protected Characteristics. Age and being married do not apply in Education.

Prejudice can and does extend beyond these protected characteristics and can lead to bullying for a variety of reasons.

People's prejudice towards difference, or perceived difference, can be a catalyst for children and young people being bullied; something which needs to be addressed.





This discussion should allow you to explore the knowledge and understanding, skills, capabilities and attributes children and young people need for mental and emotional wellbeing at different stages of their lives.

This material relates specifically to the Curriculum for Excellence Health and Wellbeing Experiences and Outcomes listed:

- I am aware of and able to express my feelings and am developing the ability to talk about them. HWB 0-01a / HWB 1-01a / HWB 2-01a / HWB 3-01a / HWB 4-01a
 - I know that we all experience a variety of thoughts and emotions that affect how we feel and behave and I am learning ways of managing them. HWB 0-02a / HWB 1-02a / HWB 2-02a / HWB 3-02a / HWB 4-02a
 - I understand that there are people I can talk to and that there are a number of ways in which I can gain access to practical and emotional support to help me and others in a range of circumstances. HWB 0-03a / HWB 1-03a / HWB 2-03a / HWB 3-03a / HWB 4-03a
 - I understand that my feelings and reactions can change depending upon what is happening within and around me. This helps me to understand my own behaviour and the way others behave. HWB 0-04a / HWB 1-04a / HWB 2-04a / HWB 3-04a / HWB 4-04a
 - I know that friendship, caring, sharing, fairness, equality and love are important in building positive relationships. As I develop and value relationships, I care and show respect for myself and others. HWB 0-05a / HWB 1-05a / HWB 2-05a / HWB 3-05a / HWB 4-05a
 - I understand the importance of mental wellbeing and that this can be fostered and strengthened through personal coping skills and positive relationships. I know that it is not always possible to enjoy good mental health and that if this happens there is support available. HWB 0-06a / HWB 1-06a / HWB 2-06a / HWB 3-06a / HWB 4-06a
 - I am learning skills and strategies which will support me in challenging times, particularly in relation to change and loss. HWB 0-07a / HWB 1-07a / HWB 2-07a / HWB 3-07a / HWB 4-07a I understand that people can feel alone and can be misunderstood and left out by others.
 - I am learning how to give appropriate support. HWB 0-08a / HWB 1-08a / HWB 2-08a / HWB 3-08a / HWB 4-08a
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