

Workplace bullying

Bullying happens in many different situations, including in the workplace. This is important to know if you have a part-time job on the weekends or after school.

When bullying happens in the workplace, it is often done by someone in a position of power, such as a boss, manager, supervisor, or someone who has been at the workplace longer or someone who is simply older than you. Sometimes, a person can be bullied by some of the other employees they work with.

Workplace bullying can take different forms. For example:

- an employee repeatedly being shouted at, insulted or threatened by their boss;
- an employee repeatedly being disciplined or punished without reason;
- an employee repeatedly being given difficult tasks without sufficient time to complete them;
- an employee repeatedly being teased, or ridiculed by fellow workers; or



- an employee repeatedly being denied the same rights and privileges as other workers.

It is your employer's responsibility to prevent and stop bullying in the workplace, regardless of who is doing the bullying. Everyone has the right to work and be free from bullying, harassment, discrimination, and violence.

If you are being bullied at work you should:

- record details of the bullying incidents;
- check your employer's policies about how to report bullying in your workplace;
- tell your supervisor or health and safety representative about the bullying;
- contact your union representative; and
- contact WorkCover.

More information and advice

People who have been seriously bullied can become depressed and develop mental health problems. If you are worried that this may be happening to you, make an appointment with your doctor straight away to talk about it.

If you feel suicidal because of bullying, talk to a trusted adult about it straight away. The Kids Helpline is available on 1800 55 1800 or www.kidshelp.com.au.

Some useful sources of information on bullying, cyber-bullying, or workplace bullying include:

- Your GP
- Lifeline: 131 114 or www.lifeline.org.au
- Youth beyondblue: www.youthbeyondblue.com
- Reach Out!: <http://au.reachout.com/>
- Inspire Foundation: www.inspire.org.au
- Headspace: www.headspace.org.au
- The Line: www.theline.gov.au
- National Centre Against Bullying: www.ncab.org.au
- Bullying No Way: www.bullyingnoway.com.au
- South Australia's Children, youth and women's health service: www.cyh.com
- National Children's and Youth Law Centre: www.lawstuff.org.au
- Cybersmart Kids Online: www.cybersmart.gov.au
- NetAlert: www.netalert.gov.au

Your local GP:



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BULLYING

What you need to know



AMA

BULLYING

What is bullying?

Bullying occurs when a person, or group of people, repeatedly says or does things to someone that are negative and make them upset or frightened. A 'one-off' argument is not bullying. Bullying can be common. One quarter of Australian school children report that they have been bullied.

Examples of bullying can include:

- repeated teasing, name calling or threats;
- being physically rough;
- being continually excluded from things.

Sometimes bullying is deliberate, and intended to make a person upset. But it can sometimes still be bullying if someone repeatedly acts in ways to make a person upset or frightened, even if it is not deliberate.



I am being bullied. What should I do?

Being bullied can be very upsetting. It can feel like you have no one to talk to about it. But it is important to remember that you are not alone. There are people you can tell, and things you can do. You can:

- ignore or stay away from the bully; or
- tell the bully that he or she is bullying you and that you want them to stop.

It is important to stay calm and not to retaliate against a bully.

Even when you try to stop someone from bullying you, sometimes they will continue. If this happens, you need to tell an adult you trust. This could be a parent, teacher, school counsellor, or your doctor. This is not 'dobbing'. An adult who you trust can help with advice on how to deal with the bullying. They can also take action to make sure the bullying stops.

In some cases, bullying can involve physical violence. Physical violence is wrong. If someone is physically violent to you or your friends, go to a safe place as quickly as possible and then tell a trusted adult or the police as soon as possible.

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Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying is bullying that happens online (eg., email, Facebook, MySpace), or through mobile phones. Cyber-bullying can include repeated behaviour like:

- sending threatening text messages to a victim;
- sending untrue, embarrassing or hurtful information about a victim in an email, sms or mms message to others, or posting it to a blog, or online site;
- emailing or posting altered images of a victim that cause them humiliation;
- sending a virus or spyware to infect a victim's computer;
- taking a victim's online identity, pretending to be them, and damaging their reputation.

You can try to prevent cyber-bullying by only giving your mobile phone number, email address, and online contact details to people you completely trust. Also, only allow your real friends to be your friends on Facebook.

If you are being cyber-bullied, you can block or ignore the sender. An adult you trust can also help you contact your mobile phone or internet service provider. Online messages and text messages can be traced, and people who keep sending bullying messages can be blocked from using their phone or internet services. If cyber-bullying is an ongoing problem for you, it is important to tell a trusted adult.

Am I a bully? Have I helped to bully someone?

Everyone is capable of bullying. Some people may have engaged in bullying without meaning to and without knowing. Sometimes people say they are 'only joking' or 'mucking around'. They forget that other people may not feel the same way, even if they don't seem to be upset at the time.

Have you ever repeatedly:

- called classmates or other students names or 'teased' them?
- been physically 'rough' with classmates and friends?
- made fun of how someone looks?
- intentionally left someone out of an activity, or purposely ignored them? or
- spread rumours about someone?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, it is possible that you may have engaged in bullying. You do not have to be friends with everyone, but you should try to treat everyone with respect.

