

Osteopathic Family Physician

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PATIENT HANDOUT

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BULLYING

Bullying is unwanted and repeated abuse. It may hurt feelings or the body. It is common among school children, so it may not be seen. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have lasting problems like drug abuse, drinking, low self-esteem, and depression, including the risk of suicide.

Signs that a child is being bullied include: lost or torn clothes or school books, injury that is not explained, new stomach pains or headaches, changes in eating, poor sleep, not caring about school work or lower grades, feeling low, sad or withdrawn, or when a child does harm to oneself.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES TO HELP KIDS

Keep the lines of talking open. Children look to parents to help with tough problems. Spending time talking with a child can teach kids that they can talk to their parents if they have a problem or need help. Talk about their day at school or things that they enjoy doing. The adult can give comfort, support, and direction even if they cannot solve the problem directly. Talk about how to stand up to kids who bully like saying “stop” with confidence and walking away or ways to be safe such as staying near groups of other kids, friends, or adults such as teachers. Keep current with kids’ lives by going to school events, meeting teachers, and other kids’ parents. Encourage good behavior and set a positive example.

CHILDREN AT RISK OF BEING BULLIED INCLUDE:

Kids who do not look the same as other kids such as kids who wear braces, glasses, or clothes that are not the same as other kids are at risk of abuse. A bully may choose kids who are skinny or fat, slow moving, depressed, or one who has low self-esteem.

Kids not in the “in” crowd or those who have fewer friends, or those who are seen as unable to fit in with others are also at risk for abuse.

GETTING HELP INCLUDES:

Talk with teachers and other school workers when your child comes to you for help. Your Osteopathic family doctor (D.O.) can also help and offer treatments such as talking about how this makes you feel and what you can do. In case of any emergency, call 911 or if you can, safely go to the nearest hospital.

Source(s): American Academy of Pediatrics, Bullying. Gov., and KidsHealth.

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