

Bullying Prevention for the Public

[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Hello, this is Dr. Greta Massetti. I'm a behavioral scientist at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

Bullying is a form of youth violence that can have lasting effects on its victims. Victims of bullying may feel intimidation, fear, or distress, or experience physical harm. Bullying primarily involves an imbalance of power and repeated acts. It can include being called nasty names, being rejected, or excluded from activities. It can also mean having rumors spread about you, having belongings taken away, or being teased or threatened. It can also include physical aggression, such as pushing or hitting.

Both boys and girls experience bullying. While boys experience more physical and verbal bullying, girls experience more psychological and relational bullying. Bullying peaks in middle childhood, when most kids are in middle school, and decreases over the high school years. Bullying is widespread in the United States. Among children age 17 and younger, about one in five report being physically bullied. About three in 10 report being teased or emotionally bullied in their lifetime.

In today's technology-driven world, children also have to deal with another form of bullying, called "electronic aggression." This refers to the use of technology to hurt another person. Electronic aggression can include any type of harassment or bullying that occurs through e-mail, a chat room, instant messaging, or text messaging. It can also happen through videos or pictures posted on websites or sent through cell phones.

Think about how much time children spend on the computer or texting their friends. With this technology, information travels fast, and someone can send a negative comment without considering its repercussions; it reaches the victim in an instant. Among children ages 10 to 17, about eight percent report being the victim of internet harassment in their lifetime.

Bullying can have serious health consequences on victims, as well as perpetrators, including physical injury and social and emotional distress. Victimized youth are at increased risk for mental health problems, headaches, stomach aches, feelings of unhappiness at school, and academic problems. Youth who bully others are at increased risk for engaging in serious violence later in adolescence, dropping out of school, and engaging in dating violence. Those who bully *and* are victims – known as bully-victims – suffer the *most* serious consequences. They are at greater risk for mental health and behavior problems.

CDC has identified several factors that increase the risk that youth will bully. These include poor self-control, harsh parenting by caregivers, and having attitudes accepting of violence. Some factors associated with a higher likelihood of being a victim of bullying include friendship difficulties; poor self-esteem; and a quiet, passive manner with a lack of assertiveness.

The ultimate goal is to stop bullying before it starts. School-based bullying prevention programs are widely implemented and require cooperation among different professionals and between school staff and parents.

Stop bullying before it begins. Don't be a bystander. If you see bullying, find a way to intervene or get help. Teachers, coaches, parents, and other kids all have the power to stop bullying.

Podcasts with information about bullying were created to support public health practitioners, educators, parents, and victims and survivors of bullying. These may be found on vetoviolence.org. We invite you to listen to them all.

For more information, please visit www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.