

I'm Being Bullied...What Do I Do?

First, try talking to the person who is treating you badly. We've talked about some ways to approach a person and let them know in a non-confrontational and non-aggressive way to talk about what's on your mind.

- Tell a parent, teacher, or important adult about what is going on.
- Ask your parents about visiting a counselor. A good therapist will be on your side and will help get you through difficult times. If it's appropriate, she'll help you find avenues to develop further social skills or she'll help you with it directly.
- Find your voice and use it. Work with a therapist, counselor, or parent on saying "no" or "stop" to the people who are trying to ruin your life. Role play the conversations, or study theater or singing to practice using your voice. Take a martial art like karate, tae kwon do, or kickboxing; they connect you with the physical power of your body and boost your self-esteem. Harness your power and challenge yourself to stand up and say what you want and what you don't.
- Get involved—really involved—in activities outside of school. Find something to fall for, and let your passion distract you.
- Live well: Create a life for yourself outside the sphere of your troubles. One of the worst things about being rejected is the feeling that the pain will never end. When you meet people who have no connection to your social misfortune, you can inhabit another world. When you find something to do that will introduce you to new friends, the positive relationships you'll forge will be your best evidence that this won't always be your life. And if you can find just one friend, he or she could buffer you against the torment you're facing.
- If you're feeling depressed—eating less or more, sleeping less or more, hating or considering harming yourself—get help. Call 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433) for immediate support by telephone, or visit www.teenadviceonline.org to chat with a counselor, ask a question, or read about depression. No one should have to go through this alone.

Adapted from Odd Girl Speaks Out

I've Been Bullying Someone...What Do I Do?

There are lots of reasons why people bully. They may see it as a way of being popular, getting attention, showing off, or making themselves look tough or more powerful. Some kids might be afraid of losing friends if they stop bullying (because they'll look less popular or powerful). Others might be jealous of the person they are bullying, or might be being bullied themselves.

Often times the need to bully comes from feelings of low self-esteem. Bullying can be a way to feel more powerful and secure. Your friends might look up to you for bullying and can make you feel more secure about your friendships.

Bullying another person may make you feel better in the moment, but it is hurtful to the victim, and you should do all that you can to stop the bullying behavior. In the end you will be proud that you found the courage to do the right thing. Below are some steps that you can take to help you stop the bullying behavior.

- Tell a parent, teacher, or other significant adult about what you're doing. They can help you figure out what's going on and help you stop.
- Take a close look at why you're making other kids feel bad. Are you trying to gain popularity? Are you afraid that if you don't, you might lose friends? Does it make you feel more powerful? Once you understand why you're engaging in bullying behavior, you can think about and find other behaviors that are healthier, more positive, and help you develop self-esteem and positive relationships.
- Ask your parents about visiting a counselor. A good therapist will be on your side and will help get you through whatever you're feeling. They'll help you figure out why you're bullying and figure out how to stop the behavior. If it's appropriate, she'll help you find avenues to develop further social skills or she'll help you with it directly.
- Before doing something that will hurt someone else's feelings, stop and take some deep breaths. Think again about why you were going

to hurt that person's feelings by excluding them or saying or doing something mean to them.

- Find your voice and use it. If you're bullying because you're feeling powerless in some way, work on developing your voice to ask for what you need to be healthy physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Work with a therapist, counselor, or parent. Role play conversations, or study theater or singing to practice using your voice. Take a martial art like karate, tae kwon do, or kickboxing; they connect you with the physical power of your body and boost your self-esteem. Harness your power and challenge yourself to stand up and say what you want and what you don't.
- Get involved—really involved—in activities outside of school. Find something to fall for, and let your passion direct you. Following a passion can help feed your soul and boost self-esteem. With more self-confidence, the need to make other people feel bad may lessen.
- If you're feeling depressed—eating less or more, sleeping less or more, hating or considering harming yourself—get help. Call 1-800-SUICIDE (784-2433) for immediate support by telephone, or visit www.teenadviceonline.org to chat with a counselor, ask a question, or read about depression.

Adapted from Odd Girl Speaks Out advice for victims