



What to Do If You Meet a Bully

Most children growing up will at some point encounter teasing or bullying. Sometimes teasing is relatively harmless but sometimes it can really hurt. Bullying can be difficult to deal with for both parents and the child being bullied.

If You Are a Kid

People may sometimes stare at an amputee and even ask questions about their amputation. Many times they are just curious and are not trying to be mean.

If this happens to you, the best way to respond is to smile, and to answer their questions in a simple way. A presentation at school (Mom or Dad can help) is a good way to explain about your amputation and artificial limb(s) and answer everyone's questions all at the same time.

What Is Bullying?

Sometimes, people tease you to make you feel bad, and that's bullying. Bullying is being mean on purpose, and using power. A bully hurts someone's feelings or body. It usually happens over and over again. Bullying happens at all ages and to many people, but that doesn't make bullying normal or OK!

There are many types of bullying – it can be pushing and shoving (physical), it can be stealing your things (intimidating), it can be teasing and making fun of you (embarrassing), or it can even be leaving you out of activities on purpose (excluding). Generally, boys bully by pushing and shoving while girls bully by gossiping – however, bullies can do other mean things too. No matter what kind of bullying it is, bullying is serious.

If you are being bullied by words, this information can help you learn what to say and how to act around a bully. **If you are being physically bullied, you need to get help from an adult right away.**

How Bullying Makes You Feel

Bullying makes people feel sad, hurt, afraid or alone. You may also feel upset because you don't know how to make the bullying stop. You may keep silent and spend more time by yourself. Instead, if you talk to someone (like a parent, school counsellor, or teacher) about it, they can help you find ways to stop the bully (or bullies). The most important thing to remember is that it's not your fault. We are all different in some way – some people have curly hair, some wear glasses and you have an amputation, but we are all the same on the inside.

Stopping a Bully

Many bullies want attention and to impress other people. Sometimes they are bullied themselves and so they bully other people to feel powerful. So, if you react to a bully, you are helping to make them feel powerful. Here are some ideas on how to stop a bully. Not all of them will work every time – you have to learn what will work best for you.

Bullies look for people who get scared or upset. If someone tries to bully you for the first time, the best thing to do is ignore them. It helps if you pretend that





you don't care about what they are saying or doing. The bully might get bored and stop. Try walking away from the bully if they are teasing you. Find a different way to walk home from school, or stick around with other people.

If the bully keeps teasing you, then you need to stand up for yourself and answer them. Use a calm, but strong voice. Don't say things like "um, could you please stop" because that makes you look unsure. Also, use their name if you know it.

If the bullies are Brian and Kim, here are some sentences you can say to them:

- "Brian, that's bullying. Stop it."
- "Kim, leave me alone."
- "Brian, stop being mean."
- "Kim, you're trying to leave me out on purpose – that's not fair."
- "So what Brian?"
- "Kim, can't you think of anything else to say?"

How you act is also very important. Act confidently, by standing tall and looking the bully straight in the eye when you talk to them. It is a good idea to practice sounding and looking confident at home in the mirror, with a friend or a parent. That way, if someone tries to bully you, they will see by the way you act that you are not afraid. And remember, asking for help is not tattling, it is being smart.

Do's and Don'ts When You Meet a Bully

Do stay with your friends
Do use a strong voice and look them in the eye
Do remember that you are important
Do tell an adult about it

Don't stay in places where there is no one else
Don't ask the bully "please"
Don't show the bully that you are scared
Don't try to fight the bully

Can You Help Someone Stop Being a Bully?

There can be many reasons why someone becomes a bully, but underneath, they are just like everyone else. They want to be liked and accepted too. Bullies often do not have many real friends or all the great things that go along with friendship – kindness, support, understanding and fun. If you let the bully know that you will be nice to them if they STOP being cruel, and perhaps even include them in your group, this may help them to change their behaviour.

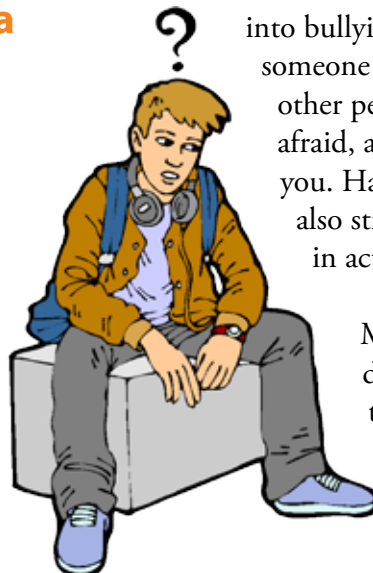
What to Do If Nothing Seems to Work

Sometimes no matter how hard you try nothing seems to work – the bully continues to tease and pick on you – what should you do? You need to get help from an adult – this could mean talking to your mom and dad and/or telling a teacher about what is happening. If the bully is being physical – punching, kicking pushing or shoving, you must tell an adult.

Tips for Teens

During the teen years, bullying tends to be more verbal than physical. It can be direct like insults, or indirect like excluding people or spreading rumours. Try not to let what the bully or bullies say get to you since bullies don't pick on people who show strong self-confidence. Avoid places where bullies hang out, and talk to someone about it.

Teens often feel pressured by their peers into bullying, or say nothing when they see someone being bullied. If you stick up for other people, bullies know that you are not afraid, and they will be less likely to bully you. Having supportive friends who will also stick up for you and staying involved in activities can really help.



Many of the issues facing amputees during the teen years are common to all teenagers, but amputees have the additional concern of dealing physically and emotionally with

their amputations. Knowing that you are not alone in your concerns and having some resources available helps an amputee deal with these issues.

Practical Advice for Parents



If you suspect your child is being bullied, ensure they know they can approach you about it – kids often do not tell their parents because they are embarrassed, or think their parents will criticize them or overreact. Silence is especially common with teenagers who are exerting their independence.

Signs that your child is being bullied include:

- Not wanting to go to school
- Constant but vague complaints of feeling sick
- Missing money, personal items or torn clothing
- Difficulty making friends
- Less interest in daily activities
- Having mood swings, being irritable and/or bullying others

Tips

- Ask questions in a calm, neutral tone.
- Try to get the full picture without interrupting or judging.
- Validate your child's feelings.
- Help your child think up ways to stop the bully, and role-play assertive sentences and body language with them.
- Share your concerns with the school, and ask that they be kept confidential.
- As parents you are your child's most important teacher.

Cyberbullying

While the Internet can be a great resource for your child, it can also be a source of dread if used by bullies to target him or her. With the widespread connectivity afforded by the Internet, bullies can spread negative messages at an unprecedented rate. They can also interact with your child using instant messaging programs or on social networking websites. No longer are taunts and teasing exclusive to the schoolyard, bus stop or public spaces.

There are steps you can take to protect your child from cyberbullying. Get Cyber Safe, an anti-cyberbullying campaign launched by the Government of Canada, offers a wealth of information on the subject, including in what circumstances cyberbullying can lead to legal consequences. Visit getcybersafe.gc.ca for more information.

Some schools are implementing anti-bullying campaigns, and you could suggest helping implement one if there is not one already in place. These are great ways to develop a positive, tolerant atmosphere in your child's school! As well, some provinces have anti-bullying legislation in place. For example, Ontario's 2012 Anti-Bullying Act established Bullying

Awareness and Prevention Week and mandated school boards to set up a bullying prevention plan.

