



# BULLYING BASICS

## WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is when a strong person hurts or frightens a less strong person, on purpose, again and again (or has a strong likelihood of occurring again), and that person who is being bullied cannot easily defend themselves.

## REPORTING

Bullying is **very different** than harassment or intimidation. If a student lets you know they are experiencing harassment, intimidation, or physical violence, you will need to **report it to an organizational official**. Even if something was shared in confidence, you are responsible for passing on information if a student's safety is in question. Organization officials will address the issue according to their safety protocols.

## LANGUAGE MATTERS

Whenever possible, use terms that describe the "**bullying behavior**" rather than the "bully," so the emphasis is on a action—not the whole person.



**INSTEAD OF:** "Have you been a bully?"

**SAY:** "Have you ever engaged in any type of bullying behavior?"

**INSTEAD OF:** "It seems like she's a bully."

**SAY:** "It seems that she engaged in bullying behavior by taking the teasing a little too far."

## WHY DO PEOPLE BULLY?

**WHEN ASKED:** "Why do people bully?"

**SAY:** "There are many reasons, but people who engage in bullying behavior learned how to act that way either through family, friends, or the media. People who bully frequently get pleasure—an emotional payoff—from the student who is being bullied (target) response. So kids who get upset become targets; those who shrug off bullying behavior are left alone."

**WHEN ASKED:** "How do I defend myself against someone who is bullying?"

**SAY:** "Your first instinct is to defend yourself—after all, you're being attacked in some way. But research shows that one effective defense, in the moment when bullying is happening, is to show that insults don't affect you. Research also shows that there is power in numbers, and the role of the bystander can impact a potential bullying situation." **Review "WHAT TO DO IF A STUDENT..."**