

DEALING WITH BULLYING

How to Cope and Why Kindness Matters

Bullying is something no one should have to experience, but unfortunately, it's still a reality in many schools, communities, and even online spaces. If you've ever been bullied—or seen someone else go through it—you know just how painful and isolating it can feel. But there are ways to cope, and even more importantly, you have the power to help create a kinder, safer environment for yourself and others.

Whether you're dealing with bullying directly or just want to be a more supportive friend, this guide is here to help you understand what bullying really is, how to protect your mental and emotional health, and how to treat others with respect and empathy.

What Bullying Looks Like

Bullying isn't just about physical harm. It can take many forms, including:

- Verbal (name-calling, teasing, threats)
- Social (exclusion, spreading rumors)
- Physical (hitting, pushing, taking belongings)
- Cyberbullying (mean comments, messages, or posts online)

It can happen at school, during sports or activities, or through texts and social media. If someone is making you feel unsafe, embarrassed, or worthless—repeatedly—that's bullying. And it's not your fault.

How to Cope if You're Being Bullied

First, know this: You are not alone, and there are people who care about you and want to help. Here is how you can take control and start protecting your well-being:

1. Talk to someone you trust.



It can feel scary to open up, but talking to a parent, teacher, school counselor, or another adult can make a big difference. You don't have to go through it alone, and they can help you figure out what steps to take.

2. Don't respond with anger.



As hard as it is, try not to fight back or say something hurtful in return. Bullies often want a reaction. Staying calm shows strength, not weakness.

3. Document what's happening.



If you're being bullied online, save messages or screenshots. If it's happening at school, keep a record of what was said or done. This information can be helpful if you decide to report it.

4. Spend time with people who lift you up.



Surround yourself with friends and family members who support you. Doing things you enjoy and being with people who make you feel good about yourself can help rebuild your confidence.

5. Practice self-care.



Being bullied can take a toll on your mental health. Make time for activities that relax you—like listening to music, journaling, exercising, or just taking a break from screens. If you're feeling overwhelmed, it's okay to ask for professional help, like talking to a school counselor or therapist.

How You Can Help Others

Even if you're not being bullied, you can be part of the solution. Everyone deserves to feel safe and valued, and that starts with small acts of kindness and courage.



1. Speak up when you see bullying.

If you feel safe, let the bully know their behavior isn't okay. Sometimes all it takes is one person standing up to make a big difference. If it's not safe to speak up, tell an adult right away.



2. Include others.

If you see someone being left out or ignored, invite them to join you. Sitting with someone at lunch, offering a smile, or simply saying "hi" can mean more than you know.



3. Don't spread rumors or join in.

Even laughing at a mean comment or sharing a hurtful post can add to someone's pain. Choose kindness over popularity—you'll never regret being a good person.



4. Be mindful online.

What you say on social media matters. Before you hit post or send a comment, take a moment to think: Would I feel good saying this directly to someone in person? If not, don't type it.



5. Be the kind of friend you'd want to have.

Support others, listen without judging, and celebrate your friends' wins. Being kind isn't about being perfect—it's about showing up and treating others the way you want to be treated.

Final Thoughts

Bullying can leave lasting scars, but it doesn't define who you are. If you're being bullied, know that it's not your fault and things can get better. If you see someone else being hurt, don't look the other way—step up, speak out, and show kindness.

The truth is, you have more power than you think. You can be the reason someone feels seen, heard, and valued. You can make a difference—not just in your own life, but in the lives of the people around you.

Choose kindness. Every day. Even when it's hard. Especially when it's hard. Because the way you treat others—and yourself—matters more than you know.