



FACT SHEET

Bullying What Is Bullying?

Bullying is a widespread and serious societal problem that has a negative impact on the “target.” (We do not use the term “victim.” Additionally, never label a person who engages in bullying behavior as a “bully.”)

It is not a “phase” that youth have to go through. It is not “just messing around,” and is not something that a youth—the one doing the bullying or the target—will “grow out of.” *All forms of bullying are prohibited in Scouting. All forms of bullying violate the Scout Oath and Scout Law.* Continued bullying of the target will lead to poor self-image and poor self-esteem. The target may also quit Scouting or become a bully to other, younger youth, thus perpetuating the bullying cycle.

Forms of Bullying

- Verbal—name calling, teasing, threats
- Social—spreading rumors, leaving the target out of activities, breaking up or manipulating friendships
- Physical—hitting, pushing, shoving, physical coercion
- Group—intimidations, ostracizing
- Criminal—injury, assault, sexual aggression
- Cyberbullying—using digital technology such as social media, gaming, texting, etc., for any of the above

Effects of Bullying

Bullying has serious and lasting effects. While these effects may also be caused by other factors, research has found that bullying has significant effects on those who are bullied, those who bully others, and those who witness bullying.

People who are bullied:

- Have higher rates of depression and anxiety, including the following symptoms, which may persist into adulthood:
 - Increased feelings of sadness and loneliness
 - Changes in sleep and eating patterns
 - Loss of interest in activities
- Have increased thoughts about suicide that may persist into adulthood. In one study, adults who recalled being bullied in youth were three times more likely to have suicidal thoughts or inclinations.
- Are more likely to have health complaints. In one study, being bullied was associated with physical health status three years later.
- Have decreased academic achievement (GPA and standardized test scores) and school participation.
- Are more likely to miss, skip, or drop out of school.
- Are more likely to retaliate through extremely violent measures. Studies indicate that in more than 70 percent of school shooting cases, the shooter had a history of being bullied.

Signs That a Youth Is Being Bullied

- Acts reluctant to join in activities
- Complains of feeling sick, makes frequent visits to the camp infirmary, has psychosomatic complaints
- Loss of money and other items such as clothing, patches, etc., that a bully may have taken from them
- Goes to activities late and/or returns early (avoidance)
- Nightmares, bedwetting, insomnia (fear)
- Refuses to leave their tent (fear)
- Waits to go to the restroom away from group (avoidance/fear)
- Seems afraid or acts nervous around certain youth
- Shows increased anger for no obvious reason
- Exhibits a drop in willingness to participate
- Comments about loneliness
- Has difficulty making friends
- Suddenly has fewer friends
- Reluctance to defend oneself verbally or physically when teased or pushed
- Has physical marks—bruises, cuts, defensive wounds on forearms or upper arms
- Appears sad, moody, angry, anxious, depressed
- Mentions or talks about suicide
- Seeks, carries, or hides weapons (as a perceived means of protection)
- Blames oneself for problems
- Avoids certain locations or areas