



FACT SHEET

The Bully

Characteristics of the Person Who Engages in Bullying Behavior

- Is mean, violent, manipulative, and/or coercive with others to get his or her way
- Gets into physical or verbal fights with others
- May manipulate or cause others to do their bidding
- Has extra money, badges, patches, emblems
- May be in trouble a lot
- Is quick to blame others
- Will not accept responsibility for their own actions
- Has friends that bully others
- Desires to win or be perceived as the best
- May be the past target of bullying or may be experiencing abuse at home

Who Is At Risk for Bullying Others?

Some people who are at risk for engaging in bullying behavior are well-connected to their peers, have social power, and at least one of the following:

- Excessive concern about their popularity
- A desire to dominate or be in charge of others
- Experience as a past target of bullying behavior

However, some who are at risk for engaging in bullying behavior are more isolated from their peers and may have any of the following:

- Depression or anxiety
- Low self-esteem
- Less involvement in school
- A tendency to be easily pressured by peers
- Trouble identifying with the emotions or feelings of others

Other risk factors for bullying others include the following:

- Being aggressive
- Lacking parental involvement
- Thinking badly of others
- Impulsiveness
- Being hot-headed and easily frustrated
- Difficulty with following rules
- Seeming stimulated by violence

What Does Not Increase the Risk?

Location. There are no differences in the rates of bullying for urban, suburban, or rural communities. Bullying happens everywhere.

School size. The overall percentages of students being bullied does not vary based on school size, although bullying does happen more often in larger schools.

Gender. Boys and girls are equally likely to be involved in bullying. Forms of bullying may vary by gender; for



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instance, some research has found that girls are more likely to bully others socially.

What Happens in the Long Term?

- Those who bully are at a higher risk for abusing drugs and/or alcohol.
- They are more likely to get into fights, vandalize property, or drop out of school.
- They are more likely to engage in sexual activity at an early age.
- They are more likely to have a juvenile criminal record.

****Factoid: 60 percent of boys who bully in middle school have a criminal record by age 24 and are more likely to be abusive to girlfriends, wives, and people with disabilities.***

How Can I Help a Scout Who Is Bullying Others?

- Raise the cost of the bullying behavior and help the Scout consider alternatives to their behavior through consequences that are
 - inevitable
 - consistent
 - non-hostile
 - escalate in severity
- Hold the Scout who engages in bullying behavior fully accountable for such actions and don't accept excuses for the behavior.
- Help the Scout develop empathy and learn to understand other people's perspectives.
- Help families and peers hold the Scout fully accountable for the actions by not suggesting or allowing rationalizations.
- Recognize and affirm the gradual progress the Scout makes toward nonaggressive behavior.
- Encourage the Scout to get involved in positive social activities where they can learn to use power in socially appropriate ways (e.g., focusing their energy on causes they care about).
- Assess whether there is an underlying reason for the bullying behavior such as impulsivity, poor social skills, or academic problems, and use appropriate techniques to address what you find.

You can find the contact information for your local council Scout executive at www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection.