

# Parenting Positively



Coping with

# BULLYING

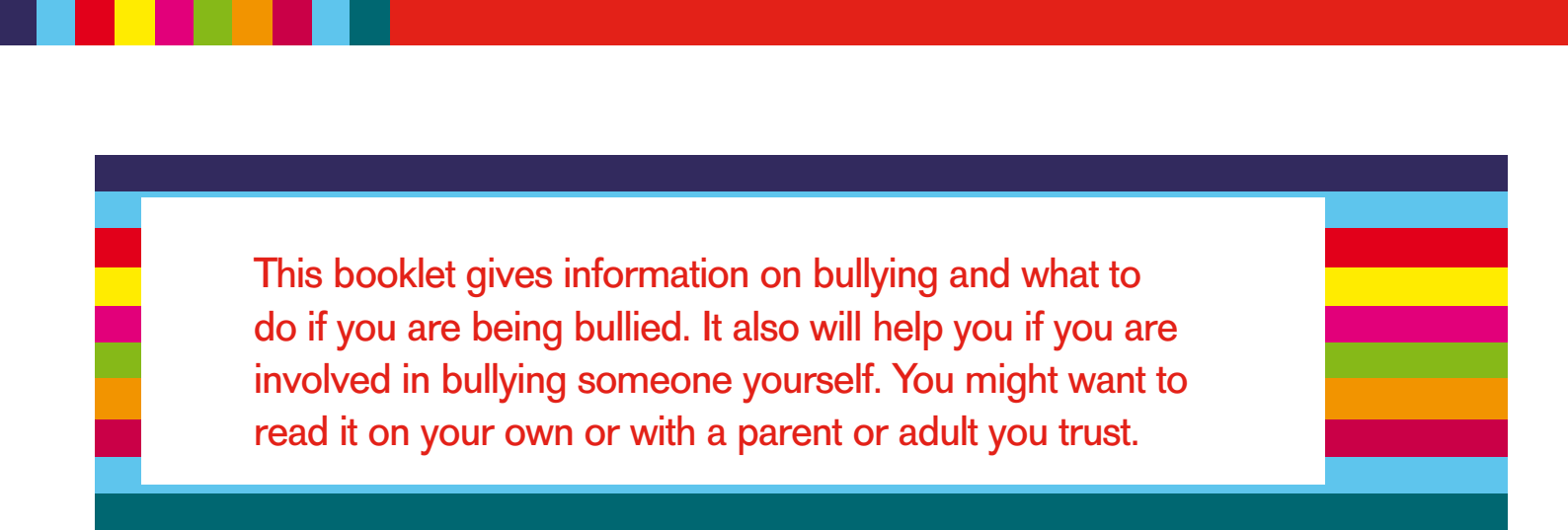
For children aged 6 to 12



Family Support Agency



Barnardos  
No child gets left behind



This booklet gives information on bullying and what to do if you are being bullied. It also will help you if you are involved in bullying someone yourself. You might want to read it on your own or with a parent or adult you trust.

## What is bullying?

Bullying is when a child or group of children make fun of or hurt another child. Bullying can happen anywhere, in school, at the playground or even in your own home. Usually bullying happens when adults aren't around.

# I have so many questions

What is bullying?

How might bullying make me feel?

How can I solve problems with friends?

Why do some children bully?

What can I do to stop if I have been bullying others?

What should I do if I see someone else being bullied?

I am being bullied. What can I do?



## Children can bully in lots of different ways:


- Name calling.
- Leaving people out of games or taking friends away.
- Making someone do something they don't want to do.
- Taking, hiding or stealing things like school bags or money.
- Making fun of someone for doing well in school or for not doing so well.
- Forcing a child to play rough games or mess fight when they don't want to.
- Telling stories that aren't true about someone.



- Sending unkind text messages, notes, e-mails or drawing cruel pictures.
- Making fun of the clothes someone wears, the bike they ride or the school bag they have.
- Hitting, kicking, hair pulling, punching, spitting, poking.
- Making up things to get someone into trouble with their teacher or someone else.
- Calling people names because they look or sound different.
- Making fun of someone's family.
- Making faces or actions to scare someone or make them feel uncomfortable.

If these things happen to you a lot then you are being bullied. You will need to talk to someone about it.

If you are doing these things to another child, this is bullying. You need to talk to someone about it and try to think of ways you can stop. Bullying is hurtful and unfair.

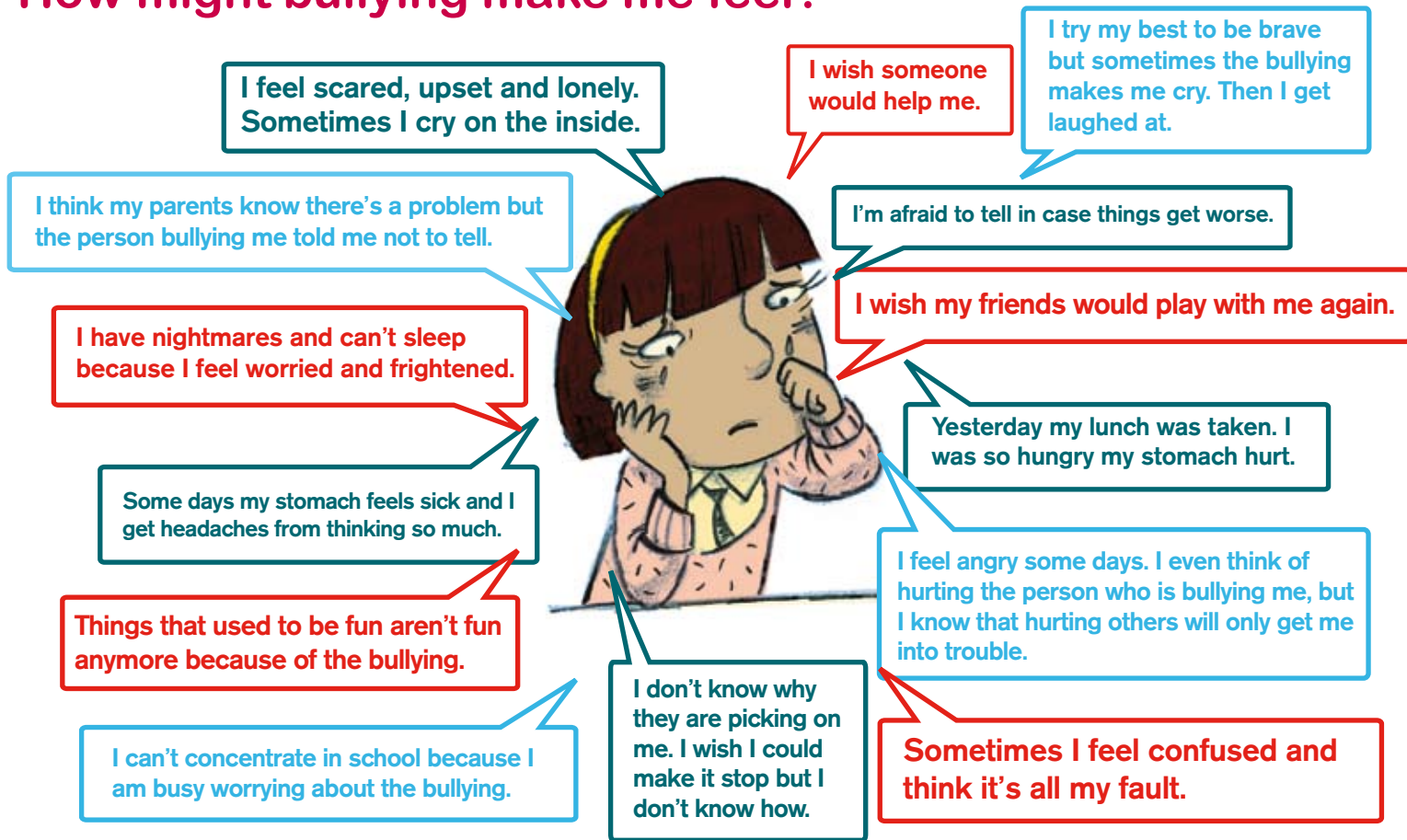


Maybe you are being bullied by an adult or a teenager? If an adult or older person does any of the following, then they are bullying you.

- Leaving you out of games, not allowing you to take your turn.
- Treating you differently from others.
- Teasing you or calling you names.
- Making fun of you in front of others and hurting your feelings.
- Putting you down when you make mistakes or get things wrong.
- Making you do things you don't want to do.
- Threatening you and telling you to keep secrets you don't want to keep.
- Mess fighting with you, hurting you and laughing it off.
- Physically hurting you or touching you in any way that makes you feel uncomfortable.

If an adult is doing any of these things or if you feel unsafe with any adult and think that you are being bullied, speak to another adult as soon as possible.

# How might bullying make me feel?



## Why do some children bully?

- Sometimes children bully because they feel jealous.
- Maybe they are being bullied at home or by someone else and they think it is okay to bully.
- They think that making people laugh at others makes them popular and they want to show off.
- They feel bad inside and want to make other people feel bad. Maybe they feel small and think that by hurting others they will feel big.
- Something has happened at home that makes them angry so they take it out on someone else.
- They don't understand how other people think or feel.
- They don't realise that bullying is wrong and hurtful.
- They've started bullying and don't know how to change even though they know it's wrong.



- Maybe things are happening in school or at home and they feel like things are out of their control. When they bully someone else they feel good because it is something or someone they can control.
- They don't know how to solve problems in a respectful and fair way.

There is a difference between 'teasing' and 'taunting'. Teasing is harmless fun, like when two friends joke about something and both people laugh. It stops if someone becomes upset about it. Taunting is when one person says something on purpose to hurt another person's feelings or to make them cry. It keeps happening even when the other person says they don't like it. Taunting is bullying.

**No matter what the reasons are for bullying, it is always wrong and unfair. It is never okay to bully or be bullied!**

# I am being bullied. What can I do?

Tell someone – your parents, your teacher or another adult. When you talk about the problem, you will find there are lots of people who will want to help. Remember, talking about bullying is not telling tales.

- Write down or draw a picture of what has been happening. Talking or drawing about your feelings will help you feel better.
- Always try to stay in a group where you feel safe.
- If the person bullying you won't let you into the group, tell an adult about it. Maybe you can find another group to join or try to make new friends outside of the group.
- You could try to join a club or start a new hobby as a way to make new friends and have some fun. Talk to your parents and find out what happens wherever you live.

Remember, it's not your fault! Bullying is wrong and you are right to look for help. If you don't look for help, the bullying will keep happening. It will be much easier to stop the bullying if you have an adult to help you and someone to talk to about the problem.

Try some of these ideas:

- Stand up straight and tall. Look the other person right in the eye.
- Walk away without saying anything.
- Maybe you could think of something to say like *'No! Leave me alone! I don't like what you are doing.'* Use a **strong** voice. When you hear yourself saying these words, you will feel more brave and confident. Try saying these things into a mirror, or with your parents. This practice will help you to feel stronger when you have to face the person bullying you.
- You might be able to think of a funny answer. Sometimes being funny will frighten the other person off, but remember not to be hurtful.
- Try not to show when you are upset.



You may feel scared but you can learn to look brave. Maybe the person who is bullying you will get bored.

Any child can be bullied for any reason. The child who bullies may tease you about your accent, the colour of your skin or the place where you live. Or maybe you are just in the wrong place at the wrong time and the bullying just happens.

The bullying is not your fault. It is because the other child feels bad, angry or hurt and wants to hurt someone else. He or she may have learned this from other children or could be being bullied themselves. Some children don't think about what they are doing and can't imagine how it feels for someone else.

It is important that you feel safe, happy and that you are having fun in school or at a group activity. Try to do things that you like such as reading a comic, listening to music or spending time with someone you have fun with. Think about all the things you are good at. Maybe you are good at sports, helping at home, telling jokes, drawing, doing sums, dancing, finding things or singing.



## What should I do if I see someone else being bullied?

If you see someone being bullied and don't do anything to help, then you are helping with the bullying. You might feel afraid but there are lots of things you can do to help.

- Tell a teacher, another adult or your parents. Teachers and adults will want to keep you and other children safe. They will try to think of ways to solve the problem straight away. Teachers, group leaders and people who work with children know a lot about bullying and will be glad that you have told them what is happening.
- Invite the person being bullied into your group. This will help them to feel safe and happy.
- If the person who has been bullying wants to play with you, explain that you will only play fair.
- Your school will probably have a programme about bullying. This programme will help all of the children in your class to learn about bullying and how to be safe.
- It is helpful if you remember what has been happening, who has been bullying and where.
- Remember, talking about bullying is not telling tales.

School, groups and clubs should be happy, safe places for everyone.

## Maybe you are doing the bullying

Now that you have learned a little, maybe you realise that you have been bullying. This is a problem because:

- You might lose friends.
- Some people feel scared of you. Even your friends may be frightened but won't say.
- There are lots of nice things about you but sometimes people don't get to see these things, instead they are seeing you hurting others.
- People might start to call you names like 'the bully'— this will probably hurt your feelings.

Hurting other people's feelings or physically hurting others is wrong. If you stand beside someone who is bullying or laugh when he or she hurts someone, then you are taking part in the bullying.



## What can I do to stop bullying others?

- Talk to someone you can trust – your parents, your teacher or an older brother/sister. Your parents care about you a lot and they will need to know if there is a problem. Once you start to talk about it, they can help you.
- Think about why you have been bullying.
  - Do you have a problem that makes you feel angry or scared?
  - Is someone else bullying you?
- Think about how the other person feels.
- Think of ways you can stop. Make a list of your own ideas.
- Set a goal each day like 'Today I won't call anyone names!' Be proud when you do this.
- Apologise to whoever you have upset. They may feel too hurt to listen at first. That's why you need to show you are sorry by stopping the bullying.
- Think about making new friends in a new group. A new hobby will be fun and a fresh start for you.



You have learned that bullying is wrong. Well done for making a change.

# Friendships are important...

Here are some ways that you can make friends and keep friends:

- Be kind and have respect for others. Tell the truth but be nice.
- If you have a fight, say sorry. If your friend says sorry and they really mean it, let them know its okay.
- Treat people the way you would like to be treated.
- Help your friends when they need help. Listen if they have a problem.
- If you make a promise, always try to keep it.

Can you think of other things friends should do? Write down your ideas.

## How can I solve problems with friends?

Here are some helpful tips:

- Try not to get angry. Take a deep breath and stay calm.
- Say what the problem is and why it's a problem for you, like *'If you don't take turns then that's not fair.'*
- Listen to what the other person or people have to say and ask them to listen to you.
- Suggest that you come up with a new idea or ways to solve the problem together. Listen to all the ideas in the group until you figure out how to solve the problem.

Remember, things won't always go exactly the way you want. One of the most important things about being in a group is learning how to give and take or make deals. This is called 'co-operating'.



There are lots of books and stories about bullying. Ask your teacher or parents to help you find out about bullying in your school or local library.



Compiled by Elaine Guiney

© Family Support Agency, 2007.

This series was produced by the Family Support Agency and Barnardos' National Children's Resource Centre.

The Family Support Agency provides support to families through locally based Family Resource Centres, through supporting organisations providing Marriage, Relationship, Child and Bereavement Counselling Services and by directly providing Family Mediation through its 16 family mediation centres to couples going through a separation or divorce. It carries out research, provides information and advises the Minister on family related matters. The Family Support Agency was established as a statutory agency in 2003.

Barnardos supports children whose well-being is under threat, by working with them, their families and communities and by campaigning for the rights of children. Barnardos was established in Ireland in 1962 and is Ireland's leading independent children's charity.

Family Support Agency, St. Stephens Green House, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2  
T: 01 611 4100 E: [familysupport.agency@welfare.ie](mailto:familysupport.agency@welfare.ie) [www.fsa.ie](http://www.fsa.ie)

Barnardos' National Children's Resource Centre, Christchurch Square, Dublin 8  
T: 01 453 0355 E: [ncrc@barnardos.ie](mailto:ncrc@barnardos.ie) [www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie)



**Family Support Agency**

