

Staying safe – being protected from harm and neglect and growing up able to look after themselves

Bullying

Bullying continues to be at the top of young people's concerns for their safety, health and well-being, and that is why this unit focuses on it. It is the most common reason for young people to call ChildLine. It is a common reason for non-attendance at school. Bullying affects young people's confidence and their ability to learn.

Bullying is a subjective experience and takes many forms. From accounts of children and young people, and research in the area, bullying is any behaviour that is:

- harmful, carried out by an individual or a group
- repetitive, wilful or persistent
- an imbalance of power, leaving the victim feeling defenceless.

Bullying generally fits into one of two categories: emotionally or physically harmful behaviour. It can include the following:

- name-calling
- taunting
- threats
- mocking
- making offensive comments
- kicking
- hitting
- pushing
- taking and damaging belongings
- gossiping
- excluding people from groups
- spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

These actions can be done face-to-face, via third parties, or via other means such as text messages and emails.

Children, young people and adults can instigate bullying and be bullied in schools and the community. The nature of bullying is changing and evolving as technology develops. What is clear is that bullying can have a destructive and harmful effect on children's and young people's lives – and not only the person who is bullied, but also to those who do the bullying and those who stand by. It can lead to self-doubt, lack of confidence, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, self-harm and sometimes even suicide (www.anti-bullyingalliance.org).

Schools and other organisations have a vital role to play in both preventing bullying and dealing with it when it happens. The ethos and values of an organisation can create an environment in which bullying is seen as unacceptable, and consistent and shared procedures deal with incidents fairly and effectively.

Providing specific opportunities to talk about bullying with young people is an important part of any anti-bullying strategy. Before you start it is vital to be aware that some of the young people may be being bullied or may be bullying someone. Therefore, you need to make sure they know where they can get help and advice either within your setting or externally (for

I want to take care of myself and take responsibility.
Young man aged 14

example, ChildLine's helpline: 0800 1111). You may also wish to check your organisation's anti-bullying policy so that you can explain what will happen if someone is bullied.

Activity 8 gives young people an opportunity to clarify what behaviour constitutes bullying and what doesn't.

Activity 9 explores situations where young people are being bullied and asks the group to think about realistic solutions.

Activity 10 focuses on assertiveness. The reason it is addressed here in the context of bullying is because being assertive can help a young person who is being bullied. You may want to stress the following to your group:

- Assertiveness is a key communication skill.
- Assertiveness takes both people's feelings into account.
- Assertiveness is not about always getting your own way at the expense of others. It is about getting a fair result for both parties.
- Aggressive and passive behaviour can stem from feelings of insecurity or low self-esteem.
- Assertiveness is an important part of taking control of our lives and being responsible for our actions.
- Assertiveness is communicated both verbally and non-verbally.

Learning outcomes

Young people will:

- be clear what bullying is (Activity 8)
- be able to identify their responses and possible solutions to bullying, including identifying people who may be able to help (Activity 9)
- be able to understand why people use different types of behaviour and how it affects others and practise being assertive (Activity 10).

You will need

- large sheets of paper
- pens
- magazines
- Worksheet 6: *Is it bullying?* (cut up a complete set of statements for each group)
- Worksheet 7: *Agony aunt/uncle scenarios*
- Worksheet 8: *Agony aunt's/uncle's advice*
- Worksheet 9: *What is assertiveness? Response cards*. Cut out the individual scenarios so that each group can have three or four. You may need to duplicate some of the scenarios between groups.

Suggested icebreakers:

How I feel
(See page 21)



Activity 8: **What is bullying?**

1. On three large pieces of paper write the words (one word on each sheet): AGREE, DISAGREE and NOT SURE.
2. Split the young people into two groups (or if the group is very large, into smaller groups).
3. Give each group some of the statements from Worksheet 6, and ask them to discuss and decide whether they agree, disagree or are not sure whether the action on the statement is bullying.
4. Back in the whole group, ask the young people to share what they have decided about each statement placing each statement on AGREE, DISAGREE or NOT SURE. When doing this they should also say how the person involved might feel.
5. After each statement has been placed, ask the rest of the group if they agree with where they have been put or if they would like to move them, and if so why?

Or:

3. Appoint different sides of the room as AGREE, DISAGREE or NOT SURE. When going through the statements ask the young people to go to the appropriate side of the room in response to the statements.

Reflection

What did you learn today?

Were you surprised by any of the things you discussed during this activity?

Facilitators note

This activity explores what bullying is. It provides a useful opportunity to discuss the different types of bullying and what to do if you are being bullied.



Activity 9: **Agony aunt/uncle**

1. Divide the young people into small groups.
2. Give each group member a copy of Worksheet 7 or a problem letter from a magazine together with a copy of Worksheet 8. Remember to be aware of the circumstances of your group – some of the statements may bring up bad memories or remind them of unpleasant situations.
3. Ask each group to take on the role of ‘agony aunt or uncle’ and think through a reply to the problem or situation using Worksheet.
4. Bring the group back together and share their ideas.

Or:

1. Cut out a selection of problems from magazines.
2. Hide the replies and, using Worksheet 8 as a framework, ask the young people to reply to the letter.
3. Compare their replies to those in the magazine.

Reflection

Which solutions were realistic?

How would you be able to use the advice?

What might stop someone getting help if they were being bullied?

How can young people overcome hurdles?

What would be your one-sentence message to young people who are being bullied?



Activity 10: **Being assertive**

1. Read out the following scenario or use an appropriate example of your own:
'You have been queuing for ages to get on the bus and it's nearly full. Someone pushes in front of you.'
2. Ask the group what the different ways of reacting to this situation might be. For example:
 - let them push in and don't make a fuss
 - push them out of the way
 - say 'excuse me, I think I was here before you'.
3. Ask the group to decide if the responses are assertive. Check the group understands what being 'assertive' means.
4. Divide the young people into groups and hand out one scenario from Worksheet 9 to each group.
5. Ask each group to discuss what the different responses might be, and to act these out using role-play.
6. Gather everyone together and ask each group to either share a role-play or talk through their different responses for the scenario. Tell them not to tell the others which response they are acting out or talking about.

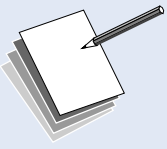
Reflection

What is the most effective way of responding to a situation and why?

What are the advantages of being assertive?

How would the different ways of responding make you feel different?

How would you feel if you were on the receiving end?



Worksheet 6: Is it bullying?

Mary tells Sharon not to be friends with Karen

Kevin is quiet and the teacher called him a mouse

Sam's dad hits him a lot

Aiysha's teacher always puts her down in front of the rest of the class

Sarah has stopped coming to the youth club because she always gets abuse from other girls

Ryan says Leroy is gay because he doesn't like football

Jasmine is always laughed at by the other girls in her class because she doesn't have the right jeans

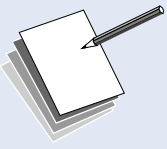
John gets threatened every morning at the bus stop by the same group of boys

A group of boys refuses to let Mark play football with them

A group of girls are always teasing Sally about being fat

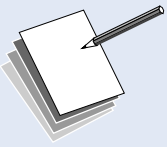
Donna calls Louise a slag because she is going out with the boy that Donna fancies

A group of lads 'tax' younger boys for money to buy cigarettes



Worksheet 7: Agony aunt/uncle scenarios

<p>Every day when I wait at the bus stop the same group appear and ask for money. I am frightened of them.</p> <p>What should I do?</p>	<p>My teacher does not believe that I am being bullied. I am being punished by my teacher and parents for lying.</p> <p>What should I do?</p>	<p>My mum's boyfriend makes sexually suggestive remarks to my girlfriend.</p> <p>What should I do?</p>
<p>My best friend is really unhappy because their older brother/sister is always picking on them.</p> <p>What should they do?</p>	<p>My mate gets picked on because s/he has never had a girlfriend/boyfriend.</p> <p>What should s/he do?</p>	<p>My friend is 13 and is picked on because her mum collects her from the youth club.</p> <p>What should she do?</p>
<p>I am getting some nasty text messages.</p> <p>What should I do?</p>	<p>My mates are bullying a new kid at our school. S/he is really unhappy. I feel sorry for them but don't want to fall out with my mates.</p> <p>What should I do?</p>	<p>I get laughed at in school because I am disabled.</p> <p>What should I do?</p>
<p>I am being picked on and being called racist names because I am Asian.</p> <p>What should I do?</p>	<p>Just because I haven't had a girlfriend, people keep calling me 'queer'.</p> <p>What should I do?</p>	<p>My dad always hits me when he has had too much to drink.</p> <p>What should I do?</p>



Worksheet 8: Agony aunt's/uncle's advice

1. How might this young person be feeling and why?

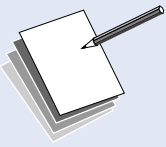
2. What choices are open to them?

3. Who could they go to for help?

4. What could they do for themselves to help them feel better?

5. What could his/her friends do to help?

6. What would your advice be?



Worksheet 9: What is assertiveness? Response cards

<p>You're in the cinema and some people in front of you are talking loudly and giggling. You can't hear the film properly.</p> <p>Assertive response is...</p>	<p>You're at home alone and looking forward to watching your favourite television programme. A relative comes round for what you know will be a long and boring chat.</p> <p>Assertive response is...</p>	<p>Your mum is hassling you to baby-sit for your younger brother. She knows you have already arranged to go out with your mates.</p> <p>Assertive response is...</p>
<p>Your girlfriend starts trying it on. You're not in the mood.</p> <p>Assertive response is...</p>	<p>Someone chats up your boyfriend at a club. You don't like it.</p> <p>Assertive response is...</p>	<p>Your best friend dresses exactly the same as you. You don't want them to copy you.</p> <p>Assertive response is...</p>
<p>Some lads try to pick a fight with you. You are frightened.</p> <p>Assertive response is...</p>	<p>You are on a crowded bus. You become aware that the man behind you is pressing himself against you.</p> <p>Assertive response is...</p>	<p>You're stopped in the street by the police for no reason. It makes you feel angry.</p> <p>Assertive response is...</p>
<p>You're being bullied in school.</p> <p>Assertive response is...</p>	<p>A man offers you money to get into his car and go for a ride with him.</p> <p>Assertive response is...</p>	<p>You think you have been unfairly treated by a teacher.</p> <p>Assertive response is...</p>