

BULLYING

“ You will never reach higher ground if you are always pushing others down.”

(Jeffrey Benjamin)

The Aim of Scouting is to promote the development of individuals, enabling them to grow and take their place in society as active citizens. As we move forward with the Canadian Path we are much more aware of each individual's personal progression, inclusive of their varying abilities. This inclusiveness within Scouting uniquely positions us to play an important role in modifying community attitudes and behaviour towards others; it starts with Scouts.

Please use this guide for a better understanding of Bullying; how as Scouters, we can make a difference by being cognizant of ways for properly caring for our youth and insuring for their personal well being. This will entail establishing a **Code of Conduct** inclusive of the topic of bullying and must be set up with both the youth and the Scouters together.

DESCRIPTION

Bullying is the use of force, threat, or coercion to abuse, intimidate, or aggressively impose domination over others. The behavior is often repeated and habitual. One essential prerequisite is the perception, by the bully or by others, of an imbalance of social or physical power.

An individual who is quarrelsome, intimidating and overbearing and harasses smaller or weaker appearing persons is a bully. The bully tries to pass off the behaviour as rough housing or just having fun. A Scouting group will want to insure that it signifies a safe place where all participants can have clean, wholesome fun and adventure and a place where bullying of any form will not be tolerated. The youth must be made to feel safe and recognize that Scouters are accepting and open to their concerns and are willing to not only hear what they have to say but that these same Scouters will take positive action to rectify a wrong.

TYPES OF BULLYING

Physical Pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching and/or other forms of violence or threats including damaging other youth's belongings and sexual harassment.

Verbal Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumors, persistent teasing, and/or threats.

Emotional Exclusion; “sending to Coventry” — making youth feel apart from the group, tormenting, ridicule, and/or humiliation.

Emotional bullying, like ridicule and exclusion, seems to be more common than physical violence and, judging by what youth tell us, it can also be the most difficult type of bullying to cope with or prove. New methods have also followed this old problem; texting, cruel photos from a mobile, emails and web-based attacks are increasingly prevalent — this is **Cyberbullying**.

CHARACTERISTICS BY AGE & SEX

Girls (Peer): Most often in the form of verbal or emotional abuse; name-calling, sending abusive messages, or taking friends away.

Boys (Peer): Most often in the form of physical abuse; hurting and pushing.

Adults: Most often in the form of emotional abuse; making fun, yelling, insulting, or picking on youth.



POSSIBLE SIGNS OF BULLYING

A youth may indicate by their behavior that he or she is being bullied. If youth show some of the following signs, bullying *may* be responsible and you should ask if someone is bullying or threatening them.

Youth May:

- Suffer from insomnia
- Feel ill in the mornings
- Appear quiet, withdrawn and isolated
- Become aggressive towards peers
- Perform tasks poorly
- Show cuts, marks, torn clothes or items destroyed
- Act temperamental
- Be unwilling to go to meetings or camps
- Become withdrawn, start stammering, lack confidence
- Become distressed and anxious
- Attempt or threaten suicide
- Cry themselves to sleep, have nightmares
- Have possessions go missing
- Continually 'lose' their pocket money or dues
- Refuse to talk about what's wrong
- Begin to bully other youth
- Show signs of depression and low self-esteem
- Display uncharacteristic shyness
- Exhibit sudden changes in academic achievement
- Give improbable excuses for any of the above

HELPING THE BULLIED YOUTH

- Restore confidence in the youth assuring that he/she is completely right in telling you they are being bullied
- Review with the group, the Code of Conduct that has been set out and established by both the youth and the Scouters, with a particular emphasis on the bullying material
- Have the youth report any further problems to a Scouter
- Ask the youth to avoid eye contact with the bully and stand confidently in front of them; the bully will not observe that they are upset and will ultimately become bored in continuing the behavior
- Ask the youth not to retaliate back if the bullying event occurs again
- Ask the youth to remain in safe areas, in eye contact with the Scouters
- Continue to monitor the welfare of the youth that has been bullied

CAUSES OF YOUTH BULLYING

- Scared of being picked on or insulted by others
- Dislike of themselves
- Problems at home
- Feeling of not fitting in with Scouting group

TURNING AROUND A BULLY

- Inquire with the youth to explore the reason of bullying
- Discuss with the youth that it is not kind to do so and that bullying should never be done irrespective of motive; not even for fun
- Explain the effects of bullying — that it causes severe grief and can even lead to despair
- Ask the youth if he/she wants to feel responsible for somebody else's sickness or pain
- Have the youth come to realize how he/she would feel if somebody were to be bullying him/her
- Teach the youth to solve problems without violence and hurting others
- Continue to monitor the behavior of the youth who carried out the bullying
- Involve the bully's parents in the process when appropriate and safe to do so

FURTHER ASSISTANCE

This Info Sheet is a resource guide only and is not intended to be therapeutic, diagnostic, medical, or legal advice. Our best source of assistance for youth expressing bullying concerns is to encourage them to obtain counsel support from a Scouter, from their parents, and trained professionals when the need is established. The information provided is designed to support the relationship that exists between a youth and his/her parents or healthcare providers and the Scouters involved with the youth.

Are you a youth in need of help right now? Call KidsHelpPhone to speak with a counsellor 1-800-668-6868 or kidshelpphone.ca

SOURCES

www.stopbullying.gov, www.bullyingcanada.ca and material adapted and used by permission of The Scout Association (UK), Scouts Australia, and Scouting Ireland.

