

Bullying Info and Facts

Defining Bullying Behavior

If the behavior of another person hurts or harms you, either emotionally or physically, it's bullying.

What is bullying? At first glance, many people might think this behavior is easy to define. For example, harmful bullying can also occur quietly and covertly, through gossip or on the Internet, causing emotional damage.

As a starting point let's consider a few other features that have been included in definitions of bullying. Although definitions vary from source to source, most agree that an act is defined as bullying when:

- The behavior hurts or harms another person physically or emotionally.
- The targets have difficulty stopping the behavior directed at them, and struggle to defend themselves.
- Many definitions include a statement about the "imbalance of power", described as when the student with the bullying behavior has more "power", either physically, socially, or emotionally, such as a higher social status, is physically larger or emotionally intimidating.

Many definitions also include:

- The types of Bullying: The behavior can be overt, with physical behaviors, such as fighting, hitting or name calling, or it can be covert, with emotional-social interactions, such as gossiping or leaving someone out on purpose.
- Intent of the part of the student with bullying behavior: "It is intentional, meaning the act is done willfully, knowingly, and with deliberation to hurt or harm," but there is some controversy with this statement as some assert that not all bullying behavior is done with intent or that the individual bullying realizes that their behavior is hurting another individual.
- Distinction about amount and duration: Many definitions indicate that the bullying is "repeated", but the reality is that bullying can be circumstantial or chronic. It might be the result of a single situation, such as being the new student at school, or it might be behavior that has been directed at the individual for a long period of time.
- The implications for all students: It is also important to note that bullying is not just about the implications for those targeted by the behaviors, but that the behavior can impact all students, including those who witness the behavior and those that engage in the behavior.
- Additional factors: these can include; the differentiation between bullying and harassment, enumeration of protected classes, statements around the use of technology, how the behavior impacts educational performance and the physical locations that would fall under the jurisdiction of school sanctions.

This information adapted from the website: <http://www.stopbullying.gov>