

Five Myths About Bullies

Myth #1:

Bullies have low self-esteem, which is why they pick on other people.



Fact: Some studies have shown that many bullies actually have high self-esteem. But they want to feel even more powerful and in control.

Myth #2:

Only boys are bullies.



Fact: Girls bully, too. Girl bullies will sometimes pick on boys, and boy bullies will sometimes pick on girls.

Myth #3:

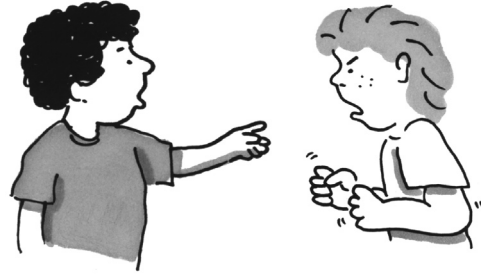
Getting bullied is a normal part of growing up.



Fact: What's "normal" about feeling afraid to go to school? Or putting up with threats or physical abuse? This myth is just an excuse for bad behavior. Plus it helps to create a "code of silence" about bullying. If you think bullying is "normal," you don't say anything about it, and you don't do anything about it. Nobody else does, either. Meanwhile, bullies keep on bullying.

Myth #4:

The best way to handle a bully is by getting even or fighting back.



Fact: Sometimes bullying is a life-or-death situation. If you try to get even with a bully or defend yourself using physical force or a weapon, things will only get worse. Bullies who feel cornered or provoked are likely to come after you again. If a weapon is involved, you may be the one who ends up getting hurt.

Myth #5:

If you ignore them, bullies will go away.



Fact: Some bullies may get *more* angry if you ignore them (after all, bullying can be their way of getting attention). They may keep provoking you just to get some kind of reaction.

So, what in the world are you supposed to do when confronted by a bully?

Take a deep breath, look the bully in the eye, and say in your firmest, most confident voice:

- "Don't do that. I don't like it," or
- "Leave me alone, I don't like what you're doing," or
- "I'll report you if you don't stop bothering me."

Then walk away.

