

# Empower Teens

Resources & strategies for teens who have been the target of bullying, who want to help a friend who has been bullied, or who have engaged in bullying.



Bullying comes in many different forms and can include saying mean things, spreading rumors, posting inappropriate photos, bothering someone, and making threatening remarks, among other things. Remember, it's never your fault if you are bullied by someone, and it can happen to anyone.

Here are some effective solutions, which other people have found helpful, and can help you solve whatever problem you are facing. It is important that you feel comfortable and confident in how you choose to handle the situation. Always think through the consequences of what you might do in advance with your decision, and if this situation takes place online, please be sure to use one of the multiple tools Facebook offers to help handle the problem.

## Tools available on Facebook

*(You can choose to do one or more of the following.)*

- **Use the “Report” link.** Facebook includes a Report link for reporting abuse, bullying, harassment and other issues on nearly every piece of content. Our global teams work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to review things you report and remove anything that violates our Community Standards (<https://www.facebook.com/communitystandards>). We don't include any information about the person who filed the report when we reach out to the person responsible.  
  
If you've reported something, you have the option to check the status of your report from your Support Inbox. Keep in mind that only you can see your Support Inbox (<fb.me/supportinbox>). Finally, get help from a trusted friend or adult so you have the support needed to handle the situation.
- **Unfriend the person.** To unfriend someone, go to that person's profile, hover over the Friends button at the top of their profile and select Unfriend.
- **Block the person.** You can block someone to unfriend them and prevent them from starting conversations with you or seeing things you post on your profile. In addition, people you block can no longer tag you, invite you to events or groups or add you as a friend. Blocking is reciprocal, so you also won't be able to see things they post or start conversations with them. When you block someone, we don't notify them that you've blocked them. To block someone, click [lock icon] at the top right of any Facebook page, click How do I stop someone from bothering me?, enter the name or email address of the person you want to block and click Block.



**Remember that bullying is never your fault, and it can happen to anyone.**

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Bullying might make you feel embarrassed and like you're all alone, but you're not alone. Reach out to someone you trust to help you through the situation. No one should ever have to tolerate being bullied.



## Stay calm

- Take a few deep breaths. Clear your mind so you can make the best possible decision about whom to contact and what you want to say them.
- Do not approach the person who bullied you when you're upset.



## Tell someone you trust

- If you've been threatened or you're worried about your safety, talk to someone you trust immediately.
- Reach out to a close friend, a family member, a teacher or even the authorities.



## Be safe

- Never risk being alone with anyone who makes you feel unsafe.
- If you talk to the person, use simple and direct language, remain calm.



## Don't retaliate

- Don't try to get even or put the person who bullied you down.
- Don't do or say something you might regret later.



## Suggestions for what to do & when

*(Decide on a few solutions that feel right to you so if one doesn't work, you can try another one.)*

### For minor incidents, like teasing or a single instance of saying mean things, try this...

- 1. Just ignore it.** Take a deep breath and let it go if it's something that doesn't really matter to you and won't affect your reputation. People who bully are looking for a response, show them you have the upper hand!
- 2. Contact the person.** If the person is someone you know well, give them the benefit of the doubt. It's possible the person really is just trying to be funny and not hurtful. Call them or send a message online to ask them about the post/photo and ask them to remove it. Facebook provides some suggested messages for you, or you can write your own. Writing to get even may just make things worse.
- 3. Delete the message or photo.** If you don't like the photo or message, delete it from the areas of the online service where you can. You might want to consider printing, or otherwise saving the post or photo in case you need it later.

### For more upsetting incidents, when you are upset but not in danger, try this...

- 1. Get help from a trusted friend or adult.** They can help you figure out whether and how to let the person know that what was posted was hurtful. Writing to get even may just make things worse.

#### Example conversation starters with person who bullied you:

- Sometimes a simple statement like this will do the trick, "Hey, NAME – that comment wasn't funny. I don't like it, please take it down. "
- If you know they are doing it intentionally, you can say, "Hey, the photo/post makes me very uncomfortable. Please take it down and delete it. I'm sure you wouldn't want a post/photo like this on your Timeline."
- If they take it down, you can follow up with, "Will you please tell everyone that what you wrote was a joke, to make sure people know it wasn't true."

- 2. Contact someone you trust for help.** Send a message or call someone you trust like a close friend, family member, or someone at your school who can give you good advice. Facebook's Bullying Prevention Center not the Bullying Prevention Center provides guidance for parents and teachers.

#### Example conversation starters with a trusted friend or adult:

- "NAME is spreading mean rumors about me 'which aren't true' and everybody believes them. I don't know what to do. Please help me figure out how to stop NAME from posting mean things/photos about me."
  - "Please help me deal with NAME and figure out how to let other people know the rumor isn't true."
  - If you are talking to a friend, you might say, "Can you come with me to talk to my mom/dad/teacher. I could use someone with me to back me up."
- 3. Block and filter access to the person.** Take advantage of the privacy settings on Facebook to block future posts.
  - 4. Report the content to Facebook.** Give a clear description of where the content is.
  - 5. Save the post/photo if something was posted online.**
    - It's a good idea to keep track of the dates and times of all incidents, which can help prove what is going on and who started it.
    - Take screenshots of the post/photo. You may need it later to share with others if the behavior doesn't stop.

### If you feel your safety, or the safety of someone else is threatened, like someone won't stop stalking you, posting explicit photos, threats of physical harm, sexual harassment, extortion, try this...

- 1. Talk to a trusted adult and contact the authorities immediately if you feel your safety is in danger.** The authorities or an adult can help you take the necessary steps to protect your safety. If you are in immediate danger, dial emergency services.

#### Example conversation starters with a trusted friend or adult:

- "NAME, has threatened to hurt me after school today and I'm really nervous. I need your help with this right away."
- "Please help me figure out how to deal with NAME who is threatening me. I'm really scared."



Bullying behavior is not one thing. It can include saying mean things, spreading rumors or inappropriate photos, bothering someone, or making threatening remarks, among other things.

Helping a friend who is being bullied is the right thing to do. We all need to back up our friends. When someone helps someone who is the target of bullying, it almost always stops the bullying. Here are some things you can do to support your friend.



**1 Make a decision to help.**

Stand up! Be someone who decides to help out a friend in need. Make sure you have the support you need to help your friend. Involve other friends, or others you trust. Everyone's safety is a priority.

**2 Make sure you are calm before you do anything.**

If you're nervous, take a few deep breaths to help calm down before you talk to your friend so you can think clearly before you ask them how you can help. If you're worried about your friend's safety, talk to the authorities, or a trusted adult at home or school immediately. It's often helpful to problem solve with an adult.

**3 Talk to your friend about it.**

Let your friend know you are there for them, that they are not alone, and that you want to help them best handle the situation. Your encouragement and support will mean everything to them.

- Remind your friend that they haven't done anything to deserve this and no one should bully them.
- Help them make a decision about how to behave in front of the person who bullied them. Help your friend build their confidence, even if they don't feel that way right now.

**4 Ask your friend what they need.**

Work with your friend to find a solution.

- Encourage your friend not to be alone with the person who bullied them if you feel they are in danger.

- Try to help them avoid escalating the problem or reacting in an aggressive way towards the person who bullied them. Retaliation can make things worse and also makes the cycle continue.
- Say, "I think that trying to get back at them will only make things worse so that's not a good idea – how would you like to handle the situation in a positive way? How can I help? What would you like me to do?"
- Don't speak for your friend unless they ask you to.

**5 Spend time with your friend.**

Offer to hang out with your friend at school. Making them feel supported and heard are helpful for a friend who has been bullied.

**6 If you're uncomfortable trying to help on your own.**

Get help from someone you trust.

**7 Help your friend tell an adult.**

Encourage your friend to talk with a trusted adult. Everyone needs support through difficult times.

**8 Talk to other friends who care.**

Ask them to post or send caring messages to your friend, build a support system for your friend.

**9 Check back over time with your friend.**

Give them a call or hang out with them to see how they are doing and continue to let them know you care.



## Suggestions for what to do & when

*(Here are some things you can do for specific incidents. Help your friend plan more than one solution; that way, if one doesn't work, they can move onto the next one.)*

### For minor incidents, you can give your friend the following advice...

- 1. Just ignore it.** After talking with your friend and deciding together that the incident was not that big of a deal, suggest they “let it go.” People who bully are often looking for a response, don’t give it to them!
- 2. Contact the person.** If the person is someone your friend knows well, see if your friend wants to give them the benefit of the doubt. It’s possible the person really is just trying to be funny and not hurtful. You and/or your friend can call them or send a message to ask them about the post/photo and ask them to remove it. Facebook provides suggested messages or you can write your own. Make sure you or your friend does not write a message to get even. That could make things worse.

#### Example conversation starters with a trusted friend or adult:

- “NAME, your friends are not going to take this seriously. You can just ignore it. If the person doesn’t get a reaction, maybe they will stop.”
  - “NAME, let’s talk to NAME together to give him/her the benefit of the doubt. Maybe s/he was just kidding.”
- 3. Delete the message or photo.** If your friend ‘just doesn’t like’ the photo or message, delete it from the areas of the online service where you are able. You may want to consider printing or otherwise saving the post or photo in case your friend needs it later.

### For more upsetting incidents, but not ones that put your friend in danger, try this...

- 1. Help your friend calmly decide.** If your friend agrees and it’s safe, you and/or your friend could approach the person who bullied your friend and ask them to stop.

There is no guarantee the person will remove the post or photo, but if you or your friend send a clear and direct message, they might. If you are unsure about what to say, ask for help from a trusted friend or adult. Facebook provides suggested messages or you can write your own.

Make sure you do not write a message to get even. That could make things worse. Also, do not approach the person who bullied your friend alone if you do not feel comfortable.

#### Example conversation starters with your friend:

- “Do you feel comfortable if I go with you to NAME and say “Hey, that post was mean – please take it down”? I also can help you write a message to them.”
- “Let’s talk to someone who can help us. Who do you trust the most to give us good suggestions? We can go together to talk to them.”
- “We can also go into your privacy settings to make sure you are set up so only your friends can see your profile. Then we can delete the post and “unfriend” or block the person who bullied you.”

#### Example conversation starters with the person who bullied your friend:

- “Hey, NAME, that post wasn’t funny and it makes NAME upset. It’s not cool to post mean things like this. Please take it down.”
- “Hey, this is wrong and you need to apologize and make it right. You really should take the post down, let everyone know it wasn’t true, and that you have apologized.”
- “Hey, the post you wrote about NAME is mean and disrespectful. You really need to take it down. It’s not cool.”

#### 2. Help your friend contact someone they trust for help.

Help your friend send a message or call someone they trust like a close friend, family member, or someone at your school who can give you and your friend good advice. You can also let them know that the Help Center provides guidance for parents and teachers.

#### Example conversation starters with your friend If s/he is upset and needs additional support:

- “It makes sense that you are really upset about this. Let’s talk to an adult right away. Who do you think is best? We shouldn’t try to handle this on our own. Let’s save the post so whoever is helping us, can see for themselves.”



## Suggestions for what to do & when continued

*(Here are some things you can do for specific incidents. Help your friend plan more than one solution; that way, if one doesn't work, they can move onto the next one.)*

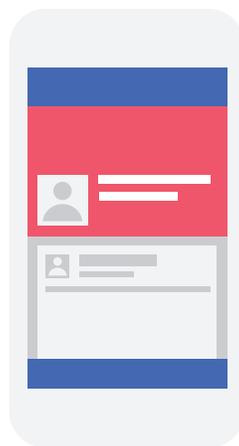
- “Let’s also let Facebook know what’s going on, so maybe they can help to remove the post and deal with the situation.
- 3. Block and filter access to the person.** You can block them and prevent them from starting conversations with you or seeing things you post on your profile. In addition, people you block can no longer tag you, invite you to events or groups or add you as a friend. Blocking is reciprocal, so you also won’t be able to see things they post or start conversations with them. When you block someone, Facebook does not notify them that you’ve blocked them.
  - 4. Report the content to Facebook.** Facebook includes a “Report” link for reporting abuse, bullying, harassment and other issues on nearly every piece of content. To report a post, click on the top right of the post you want to report and choose the option that best describes the issue and follow the on-screen instructions.
  - 5. Save the post/photo.**
    - It’s a good idea to keep track of the dates and times of all incidents, which can help prove what is going on and who started it.
    - You can also print the post/photo. You may need it later to share with others, if the behavior doesn’t stop.

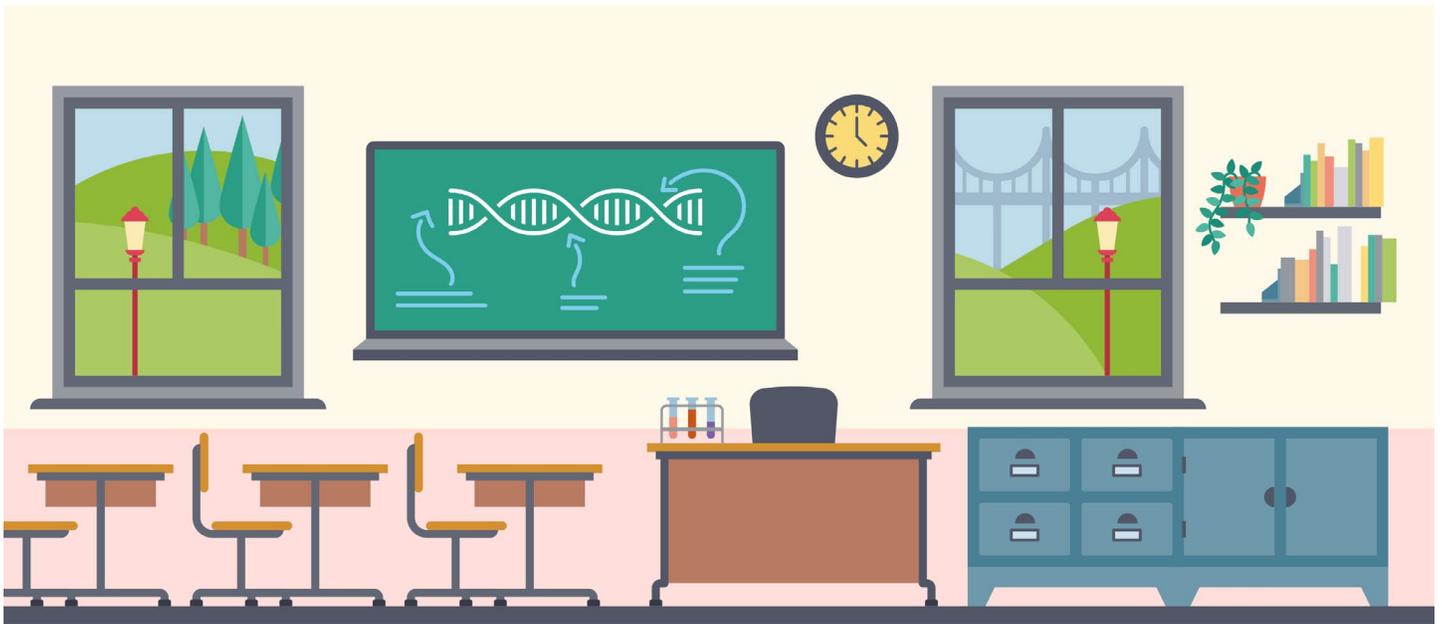
### If you feel your friend’s safety is threatened...

- 1. Talk to a trusted adult and contact the authorities immediately.** If you feel your friend’s safety is in danger. The authorities or an adult can help you take the necessary steps to protect your friend’s safety. If your friend is in immediate danger, dial emergency services. Let them know exactly where your friend is located.

#### Example conversation starter with a trusted friend or adult:

- “NAME, has threatened to hurt NAME after school today and I know s/he is really nervous. S/he could really use your help with this right away.”





## How to respond if you have been told that *you* have been mean or hurtful to someone or you have been accused of bullying someone.

Bullying happens when someone is mean, hurtful, or in some cases, scares another person and the person who is hurt or scared has a hard time defending himself or herself. Bullying can also include spreading rumors, posting an inappropriate photo, bothering someone, or making threatening remarks, whether in person or online.

Each of us is responsible for our own behavior and for everything we say. It's never okay to bully or hurt someone else, and no one should be expected to tolerate being bullied. No matter what a person says or does, the way you behave towards another person is always your own choice. If you are upset by someone walking away, having a conversation, telling someone what you didn't like about his or her behavior, or problem solving together are more effective ways of handling oneself. Remember, we can never know what will make someone upset, so it's best not to take any chances.

Kids who get involved in bullying behavior sometimes:

- Are not caring of other people's feelings
- Have a hard time understanding other people's perspectives
- Tend to blame others for things that go wrong
- Have a hard time handling anger and other strong emotions
- Are verbally aggressive toward others
- Seek power in relationships
- Provoke physical fights

If any of these behaviors sound like things you do, it's a good idea to talk with a trusted adult like a family member or teacher to get help.

Find some tips to help you if you have been accused of bullying on the following page. ►

## General Advice

**1. Apologize.** Whether or not you believe you hurt someone, if someone feels hurt by something you said or did then there is some kind of problem. It's important to make a sincere apology. Apologizing can:

- show strong character because people know you are able to say you're sorry;
- is the first step in repairing a relationship; and
- can help you shift your reputation away from being a "bully." People might respect you for trying to create a better environment for you and your peers by clearing the air and apologizing.

If you are unsure about why you were seen as a bully, apologize and ask the person to let you know more about why what you said or did was hurtful. Let the person know you will be more careful and will not repeat it.

It is also important to let everyone who witnessed your behavior, or who saw your post, know that you are sorry and have apologized. Instead of being seen as a bully you can now be viewed as a positive role model for how to repair a bullying situation.

**2. If you need help in apologizing, get guidance from a trusted friend or adult.** If you are afraid or uncomfortable about how to apologize or repair the relationship, ask a trusted adult or friend for guidance. You might have the friend or adult with you when writing a message, calling the person, or meeting with them in person. Discussing the situation with a trusted friend or adult also can help you to understand your own behavior better.

Below are potential "conversation starters" that may help you apologize or resolve the situation.

### If you realize what you did was wrong and feel sorry for what you did:

#### Example conversation starters with the person you hurt:

- "X, I am very sorry for what I did. I understand why you are upset. I'm going to take down the photo/post right away. I should never have done that. I hope you will forgive me."

#### Example conversation starters with a trusted friend:

- "X, I was not thinking when I posted this message about Y, I'm so sorry that I hurt X! Everyone is saying mean things about me, and I don't want to be seen as a bully. Please help me figure out how to apologize to Y and everyone else."

### If you are CONFUSED or SURPRISED about why someone accused you of bullying because you did not intend to hurt someone, apologize and ask for clarification.

#### Example conversation starters with the person you hurt:

- "I'm so sorry for what I did. I had no idea that what I said was so hurtful. I really didn't mean to hurt you. Please let me know what was wrong with what I said so I can be sure not to do it again. Can you accept my apology? Please let me know if there is anything else I can do."

#### Example conversation starters with friends who witnessed the event:

- "On Thursday, I wrote something on X's wall that was seen as disrespectful. I thought it was funny, but I now realize why they were upset. I apologized to X and want everyone to know that I am sorry."

#### Example conversation starters with a trusted friend:

- "X just sent me a message saying that they were hurt by what I said. I'm not sure what I did wrong. I really didn't mean to hurt X. Do you know why X was so hurt? I want to apologize, but just don't know what to say."

### If you felt JUSTIFIED in what you did and intended to retaliate because you feel that they hurt you first:

#### Example conversation starters with the person you hurt:

- "X, what I just posted was not okay and I'm sorry. I was upset about what you said to me the other day and instead of telling you I posted that message. I still feel that what you said was wrong too. I want to apologize and I hope you can too. I'll let everyone know that what I did was wrong and hope you will too."

#### Example conversation starters with friends who witnessed:

- "On Thursday, I wrote something on X's wall that was really disrespectful. What I said was not true and I apologized to X. We agreed that we were both wrong."

#### Example conversation starters with a trusted friend:

- "X, I need to talk to you. Last week X said something that made me really mad so I posted something mean about X. I know it was wrong, but in that moment I felt justified in doing it. I want to apologize, but I don't know what to say. I think we were both wrong and think we should both apologize to each other and all our friends."

# Bullying Prevention

Check out the important tips below to help teens prevent or respond to bullying in their community.



## 1 Become an expert.

Educate yourself, understand bullying and how/where it occurs. Ask your friends for ideas about how to prevent it.

## 2 Help educate your community and be an advocate.

- Speak out against bullying. Have a conversation with your friends about bullying.
- Encourage your friends to share their experience as someone who will stand up. This will start a positive ripple effect.
- Start a club, build a campaign or host an event to raise awareness.
- Interview experts to learn more about the issue and what can be done.
- Create information posters to build awareness in school about problem and solutions.
- Be a role model and mentor to younger students & relatives about how to be safe online and offline.

## 3 Be smart, safely secure your identity & personal info.

- Set up privacy controls in your profile so you can control who sees your information.
- Protect your password and change it regularly
- Never open unidentified or unsolicited messages.
- Log out of online accounts when not in use.
- Use online search engines to search your name regularly. Try to remove personal information that makes you uncomfortable.

## 4 Be responsible.

Pause before you post. Don't post anything that may compromise your reputation, or the reputation of others. Treat others how you want to be treated.

- Assume everyone has access to your profile (parents, teachers, future employers and authorities).
- Use good judgment when putting pictures up.
- Don't discuss things or use language you wouldn't want your family to see.
- Don't add people as "friends" unless you know them.

## 5 Be compassionate – Be strong.

- Make a decision to help – ask yourself, "am I going to let this person bully this person, or am I going to do something about it?"
- Support the target!
- Try to include anyone who is being left out.
- Discourage those who hurt or humiliate others. If it's safe, make it clear you think the behavior is wrong.
- If you see something going on that is wrong, speak up or leave the room and tell a trusted adult.

## 6 Never retaliate or get back at the responsible person.

Be "bigger" than that, retaliation keeps the cycle going.

## 7 Never encourage or indirectly contribute to the behavior!

- Don't forward hurtful messages, laugh at improper jokes or content, or support the behavior just to fit in.