



# How we can help

Counseling and therapy are helpful in working through the depression, anxiety and feelings caused by being bullied. A therapist can also teach new skills such as coping with bullies, problem-solving skills and how to walk away from a bully.

## What About the Bully

Some bully because they feel insecure, haven't learned to manage anger and other strong emotions, don't know how to work out conflict cooperatively or have been (or still are) the victims of bullying, trauma or abuse.

Kids who bully others are more likely to use alcohol and drugs as teens, get into fights, drop out of school and be abusive to their spouses, partners and children as adults.

Professional counseling can help those who bully learn to deal with their feelings and underlying reasons for bullying, practice stress management skills and improve their social skills.

## Cyberbullying

With the increased use of computers, smart phones and other devices, a new form of bullying has emerged—cyberbullying...the use of technology to harass, threaten, embarrass or target another person. Recent studies show about 1 in 4 teens have been the victims of cyberbullying and about 1 in 6 admit to having cyberbullied someone.

### Signs of being cyberbullied

- Change in mood after computer or phone use (sad, angry, withdrawn, tearful)
- Avoiding family, friends or social situations
- Obsessive behavior relating to their device (have a password, keep device next to them at all times)
- Highly secretive when using computer or phone (hide what they are doing, turn off device when parent walks in room)
- Change in grades
- Defensive when computer or phone use discussed

## Contact Information

### Outpatient & Telehealth

We offer assessment, psychiatry, psychosocial help and individual, group and family therapy through our outpatient clinics and telehealth services throughout Michigan.

**866.852.4001**

**[pinerest.org/locations](https://pinerest.org/locations)**

**[pinerest.org/telehealth](https://pinerest.org/telehealth)**

### Psychiatric Urgent Care

For urgent needs, our Psychiatric Urgent Care Center is open daily to adults for same day assessments. Appointments are also available through telehealth.

**616.455.9200**

**[pinerest.org/urgent](https://pinerest.org/urgent)**

### Crisis Services

If you or a loved one are in crisis, please call our hospital Contact Center which is staffed 24/7 by licensed clinicians.

**800.678.5500**

**616.281.6446 (TTY line)**

**[pinerest.org/inpatient](https://pinerest.org/inpatient)**

# UNDERSTANDING Bullying



For more information about mental health topics, please visit: **[pinerest.org/insights](https://pinerest.org/insights)**

## What are the signs and how do you make it stop?





# What is Bullying?

An aggressive behavior that is intentional and involves an imbalance of power or strength, bullying is a repeated behavior and can be physical, verbal or relational. It can take many forms including:

- Physical violence
- Intimidation and threats
- Name calling and belittling
- Social exclusion (i.e., leaving someone out of social gatherings and activities)
- Gossiping and spreading rumors
- Public humiliation
- Using slurs, words or phrases that characterize a victim as unacceptable or worthless

## Who is at Risk?

Bullies target people for a variety of reasons:

- Good at what they do (i.e., sports or receive a coveted award)
- Do well at school or work
- Are popular or well liked
- Have few or no friends
- Personal vulnerabilities (i.e., introverted, anxious or submissive)
- Physical features that attract attention
- Disease or illness
- Different sexual orientation
- Different religious or cultural beliefs
- Belong to a different racial group

Kids who are overweight, gay (or perceived to be gay) or have a disability are up to 63% more likely to be bullied.



Bullying was accepted as a part of life for many years at school, the workplace and in social groups. However, today we recognize it as unhealthy behavior with wide ranging consequences to the victims and to the bullies.

Cyberbullying is an especially hot button issue today since its victims can be attacked 24-hours-a-day by those they know as well as complete strangers.

## Warning Signs of Bullying

- Unexplained cuts, bruises, scratches and/or missing or torn pieces of clothing
- Afraid to go to school or other social activities
- Spends no time with friends or seems to have very few friends
- Loss of interest in school or other activities that were previously enjoyed
- Suddenly begins to do poorly in school
- Sad, moody, teary or depressed after school or other activities
- Acts anxious, withdrawn or isolating
- Low self-esteem
- Changes in sleep and eating patterns

## Effects of Being Bullied

Bullying can lead victims to feel tense, afraid, sad, lonely, unable to concentrate and can lead to lower grades, school avoidance, lower self-esteem, depression, anxiety and health complaints. Although kids who are bullied are at higher risk of suicide, bullying alone is not the cause. Many issues contribute to suicide risk, including depression, problems at home and trauma history.

## Strategies to Counter Bullying

- Act confident and try to ignore
- Walk away from the bully
- Avoid typical bullying places (back of bus, certain social websites, etc.)
- Stick with allies (walk together, sit in a group)– there is comfort and strength in numbers
- Use humor
- Get help from an adult

Myth	Fact
Bullying is a normal stage of life everyone goes through.	Bullying is not normal or socially acceptable behavior. We give bullies power by acceptance of this behavior.
Telling someone will just make it worse.	Research shows that bullying will stop when adults in authority and peers get involved.
Victims should stand up for themselves and hit the bully back.	Hitting back usually makes the bullying worse and increases risk for injury.
Bullying is a school problem; the teachers should handle it.	Bullying is a broader social problem that happens everywhere... at school, on the street, at shopping centers, the local pool, in the workplace and online.
People are born bullies.	Bullying is a learned behavior, and behaviors can be changed.