

## Someone's being bullied: What should I do?

### A Questionnaire

Sometimes we see bad things happening to other people. Sometimes we are part of a group that is doing bad things to other people. When we witness bullying we tend to act in predictable ways - we do the same thing every time. Read the questions below and choose the answer that best describes you. Be honest with yourself. When you are finished scroll down to the bottom to find out how you scored.

- 1. Kids are picking on another student at recess. They're making fun of her clothes. You don't know them. What do you do?**
  - a) Join in. After all you're not really hurting anyone.
  - b) Keep playing. It's not your problem.
  - c) Talk to them privately. Tell them you are sorry.
  - d) Tell the group that they are being unfair and judging people on appearance.
  
- 2. A person in your group forgot a book that was needed to complete the project. One of the students is really angry with them. What action will you take?**
  - a) Yell at the student. They've done this before. Maybe if everyone tells him what a loser he is, he'll remember next time.
  - b) Go to another table and start working on your part of the assignment.
  - c) Change the subject. Ask a question you know the answer to.
  - d) Tell the person you are frustrated but understand how mistakes happen.  
Ask the person how they can make it up to the group.
  
- 3. Every recess you join a group of friends who take another student's hat. Everyone laughs when the student runs to get their hat back. What do you do?**
  - a) Grab the hat. Pretend to give it back then throw it to someone else.
  - b) Go play somewhere else during recess.
  - c) Throw the hat on the ground and suggest you go play something else.

d) Give the hat back. Invite the student to play.

**4. One of the students in your class is calling another student names (like gay or fag) when the teacher can't hear. You're glad it isn't you. What do you do?**

- a) Laugh. Better to laugh at someone else than be laughed at.
- b) Pretend you don't hear it. After all they're not bothering you.
- c) Pretend the teacher is listening. Get everyone back to his or her work.
- d) Speak up. Talk about not using "isms". Talk to the teacher to lead a discussion if it doesn't stop.

**5. Your good friend has invited you to a party. They won't invite people they think are "losers" and they are making the list of names quite clear to anyone who will listen. How do you react?**

- a) Go up to the "loser" and tell them they aren't invited. Go back to your group of friends laughing.
- b) Talk about the party. Ask if there is anything you can bring.
- c) Make up an excuse why you can't go to the party.
- d) Tell your friend you can't come if they deliberately exclude others. You can't invite everyone but you don't have to make those left out feel bad. Host your own party and invite everyone.

**6. One last shot and your team wins the game. Your team member misses an easy shot? Everyone is mad and calling him names. What do you do?**

- a) Call the student a name. After all he'd do the same to you.
- b) Run to the water fountain for a drink.
- c) Pat the student on the back when no one is looking.
- d) Remind everyone that you are a team. Pat the player on the back and tell him you know how it feels.

**7. Your friend has told you that he is being harassed everyday after school. What are your actions going to be?**

- a) Dump him. You don't need trouble.

- b) Tell him you'd like to help him but you don't want to risk getting someone after you.
- c) Walk with your friend. Keep an eye out for the bully.
- d) Encourage your friend to ask for help. Go with him when he seeks help.

**8. A new kid wants to join in your group. No one really likes him so they decide to make him steal a chocolate bar. What do you do?**

- a) Encourage him to steal the chocolate bar. Laugh with your friends as he enters the store. Take off...you don't want to be anywhere near the store if the kid gets caught.
- b) Don't say a word. Sit back and see what happens.
- c) When no one is looking try to signal to the kid not to do it.
- d) Find other friends. Tell the kid what is happening. Perhaps you can become friends.

**9. When you are at your friend's house the whole gang is really mean to his little brother. He's even gotten hurt a couple of times. How do you handle this situation?**

- a) Give him a little push. It can't hurt. Besides, the kid can be a big pain...he deserves it.
- b) Don't join in. Watch T.V. or listen to music.
- c) Talk to the little brother. Suggest the group go outside and play basketball.
- d) Intervene. Tell your friend that it isn't cool to hurt little kids especially your family. Suggest an alternate activity.

**10. One of the kids at school has a knife. You know because you've seen him bothering other students. What's your next action?**

- a) Ask him to see the knife. Give him some of your candy. Better to have him as a friend.
- b) Avoid the kid with the knife. Don't go anywhere near him.

- c) Talk to the other student who is being bothered. Talk about getting a group together so you feel safer.
- d) Tell someone in authority - your parents, the principal. Report the incident to the police if necessary.

## SCORING

To find out how you did, go back and count the number of times you chose each letter.

If you answered "A" a lot, then you had a negative response.

If you answered "B" a lot, then you had an uninvolved response.

If you answered "C" a lot, then you had a supportive response.

If you answered "D" a lot, then you gave an assertive response.

### **Negative Response (Mostly answered "A")**

When we are with our friends or in a group it is natural to want to belong. It is tough to ignore the group, especially if they might turn on us! We sometimes think it's better to join in than become the victim. "Group think" can lead people to do all kinds of things they would never do on their own. Joining in to hurt another person is never okay. It makes bullies feel more powerful to have people follow them and it makes the victim feel weaker, knowing others have joined in. If you willingly join in, you need to look at why you want to bully others and to understand why you need to feel powerful at another person's expense. Find a responsible adult to help you stop your hurtful behaviour and find more positive responses. If you unwillingly join in, then you need to ask yourself what else you can do. How can you prevent yourself from getting into situations where group bullying occurs? Maybe you need to join an after school group, find other interests like sports or seek new friends. There is no excuse for joining in. It's never harmless and it's never okay.

### **Uninvolved Response (Mostly answered "B")**

When you are uninvolved you look the other way and pretend it didn't happen. Many people are uninvolved by-standers. They think if they don't do anything then they are innocent of any wrong doing.... **WRONG!** Not acting is just as wrong as being actively involved. There are times when we might be in danger and think we can't actively respond at the time. Non-action is acceptable under these circumstances but that doesn't mean we shouldn't do something as soon as possible. Talk to the bully, talk to the victim and help them get help. Your inaction speaks volumes...it says you don't care. Read on to find out how you can help.

### **Supportive Response**

When you are supportive, you try to help the victim but you don't necessarily want to take a stand and be seen as on their side. It's okay to let them know you feel sorry for them but you can't do any more or your other friends would think you were a wimp. Supportive behaviour does help the victim know they are not alone. Sometimes it is all you can do at the time but supportive behaviour is really taking the easy way out if you don't actively seek to help the person in trouble. Supportive behaviour is positive but it isn't enough to stop the bully. It only diverts the problem for a little while. Read on to see how you can really help stop bullying.

### **Assertive Response**

Do something. *Get involved.* Sometimes this means pointing out the bullying behaviour to others. This takes courage. Bullies want others to join in rather than try to stop them. They know that if you say no, others in the group are more likely to say no too. Remember if you do stand up to a bully, stay calm and be polite. Don't become a bully yourself. Be careful, the bully may turn on you. Taking a stand is important but so is your safety. If the situation is, or might become dangerous, decide how you can help the

victim. Can you support them by talking to the bully or standing up to a group or will this lead to trouble? You must think every situation through before you act. If there is real danger, to you or the victim, then that is the time to seek help. Get the victim to ask for help...or ask on the victim's behalf. It isn't ratting or tattling...it's responsible reporting. You are making sure that everyone is safe by going to a responsible adult. Just think, if every by-stander helped the victim by standing up to the bully, encouraged positive group behaviour and reported dangerous and hurtful behaviour, bullying would end! By-Standers have an important role to play...maybe the most important role. Are you ready to help?