

What is bullying?

Bullying is when someone repeatedly tries to hurt someone else on purpose. The key concepts of this definition are:

- **Intentional:** A behavior needs to be intentional or on purpose to be considered bullying.
- **Repeated:** Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.
- **Imbalance of power:** The child doing the bullying is bigger, stronger or more popular than the victim and uses this power to hurt the victim physically or emotionally.

Bullying is different from everyday conflict or accidents. Bullying can include actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and purposely excluding someone from a group. Everyday conflict and accidents happen, but they are not repeated and do not include a power imbalance or an intent to harm.

Some of the most common types of bullying include:

- **Verbal bullying:** Includes making threats, teasing and name-calling
- **Social bullying, or relational bullying:** Includes spreading rumors, publicly making fun of another child, excluding others and telling kids not to be friends with someone
- **Physical bullying:** Includes hitting, kicking, pushing someone down, or taking and breaking things that belong to someone else

Kids who bully want to be in control. They often find rewards in their behavior; whether it's a material reward, such as taking someone's lunch money, or a psychological reward, such as feeling powerful.

Bullying is a learned behavior, and it can be unlearned.