



HELPLINE 0808 800 2222

Social bullying

Advice for young people

Being socially bullied is the second most common form of bullying, after [name calling](#). This type of bullying is also known as covert and relational bullying as it is designed to humiliate and damage someone socially.



In our national bullying survey, 55% of young people surveyed have experienced social bullying. Of those who have been cyberbullied, 36% were left out on purpose and 51% had false rumours spread about them.

What is social bullying?

This sort of bullying is often harder to recognise and is often carried out behind the back of the person who is being bullied. It includes:

- Lying, fake rumours and spreading gossip
- Encouraging others to turn against someone
- Leaving someone out constantly and encouraging others to do the same
- Socially excluding someone online, cyberbullying, negative comments on posts and images
- Damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance
- Using humiliating nicknames and continuing when asked to stop

It isn't easy for someone going through this to accept when the line crossed from being a prank or banter to persistent bullying. By the time you realise it is bullying, it may feel harder to seek support.

*"Pulling faces, writing notes in class, telling everyone to not speak to me and Chinese whispers about me."**

How it might make you feel

When you are faced with social bullying, your first instinct may want to isolate yourself and withdraw from all social situations, online and face to face. This is a natural emotion as you are trying to protect yourself from harm.

Emotionally, your self-esteem and confidence might be taking a knock and you may be experiencing anxiety and depression which can have a serious knock on your emotional and mental health and well-being. Another emotion you may feel is anger and this may develop into aggressive behaviour. The anger and frustration can feel destructive so getting help is important.

*"Keeps being horrible to me about everything. He was my best friend. I can't move away because I would have no one as a friend. All my other friends gang up with him against me and I'm always the butt of the joke."**

All of these emotions are a process, it is a journey that you go through to help you understand how your feelings. It is important to try and speak to an adult you trust, such as your parents, a teacher or a relative perhaps. Seeking support can help you gain the strength you need to get the bullying stopped.

Why do they bully?

It is hard to fully understand the reasons behind why people feel the need to bully others. Some of the more common reasons are:

- Attention seeking behaviour, doesn't matter if it is positive or negative.
- Might be a need for them to think they can get what they want from being a bullying.
- To impress others and think they are gaining respect and popularity amongst their peers
- To punish people they are jealous or envious of, so targeting them for bullying.
- Because others are doing it and they too afraid to speak up.
- They may have low self-esteem, confidence and possible anger issues.
- Been bullied themselves.

Whatever the reasons may be, it does not give anyone the right to make others feel low or bully others to make themselves feel better.

*"Bringing you down commenting on everything you do trying to be better than you controlling over you."**

Tips on overcoming social bullying

Dealing with social bullying can be tough. Here are some tips:

Trust your instincts – Friends that care will never bully! The ones who do, were never your friends in the first place.

See the bigger picture – Easier said than done but just remember those who are bullying may have issues and although this is no excuse, it may be a reason as to why they are choosing to act this way.

Ask for help – Asking for help to get this stopped is not a weakness, even having someone to talk to can help enormously! Get your loved ones on board.

Get involved - Join a group that offers activities that you really like and that give you a chance to shine. You might even want to use your experiences to set up a peer support group for those who are being bullied.

Be yourself – Don't let the small minded actions of other dull your shine. Be kind, be confident and love who you are. The bullies will soon get bored when they don't get a reaction.