



Why don't kids ask for help?

Statistics from the 2012 Indicators of School Crime and Safety show that an adult was notified in less than half (40%) of bullying incidents. Kids don't tell adults for many reasons:

- Bullying can make a child feel helpless. Kids may want to handle it on their own to feel in control again. They may fear being seen as weak or a tattletale.
- Kids may fear backlash from the kid who bullied them.
- Bullying can be a humiliating experience. Kids may not want adults to know what is being said about them, whether true or false. They may also fear that adults will judge them or punish them for being weak.
- Kids who are bullied may already feel socially isolated. They may feel like no one cares or could understand.
- Kids may fear being rejected by their peers. Friends can help protect kids from bullying, and kids can fear losing this support.¹

What makes the CBT approach a particularly fitting method for the bullying issue?

One of the most effective therapies in addressing the emotional distress caused by bullying is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). Bullying has been correlated with anxiety, depression, poor self-image, substance abuse and suicide. CBT is the most widely acclaimed, trusted and research-supported treatment method for these issues. CBT teaches individuals to better understand their thoughts and feelings in relation to the situation. Furthermore, it teaches individuals how their thoughts and feelings influence their actions and ultimately their behavior. In regards to bullying, oftentimes teens who are bullied are not aware of their self-defeating thoughts and destructive behaviors. CBT helps individuals realize their maladaptive coping mechanisms and works on replacing them with more positive ones. For example, teens who have been bullied may struggle with self-worth and confidence. Their negative thoughts about themselves affect how they see situations, magnify their insecurities, increase their negative self-talk, and result in feeling worse about themselves. CBT will tackle destructive thinking patterns, confront distortions, break down the wall of self-doubt and help the victim regain confidence and control of his/her life.²

Signs a Child Is Being Bullied...

Look for changes in the child. However, be aware that not all children who are bullied exhibit warning signs.

Some signs that may point to a bullying problem are:

- Unexplainable injuries
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewelry
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating. Kids may come home from school hungry because they did not eat lunch.
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self esteem
- Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide.¹

Signs a Child is Bullying Others

Kids may be bullying others if they:

- Get into physical or verbal fights
- Have friends who bully others
- Are increasingly aggressive
- Get sent to the principal's office or to detention frequently
- Have unexplained extra money or new belongings
- Blame others for their problems
- Don't accept responsibility for their actions
- Are competitive and worry about their reputation or popularity.

1. stopbullying.gov

2. [psychology today](http://psychologytoday.com)