

Student Program 1

TITLE Bullying: What can I do and where can I go?

Dr Carr-Gregg: Bullying goes on in every school in Australia so it makes sense for you to be prepared to deal with bullying situations. You can do this by thinking about how to respond before it happens, and even practise some ways to handle bullying situations. You can ask your teacher for a copy of the school's bullying policy that will tell you how your school deals with bullying. This policy can also help you to understand what you need to do if you are in that situation.

The good news is that there are a number of things you can do depending on whether the bullying is physical, verbal, social or whether it's face-to-face or digital. There are also times when you should ask for help. Think about who you will ask and what you might say, and be persistent: keep asking until you get listened to. There is a lot of information on the web to help, for example the Bullying No Way website.

Remember, you have the right to be safe at school. Schools take their responsibility to keep you safe very seriously and will do everything in their power to provide you with a safe place in which to learn.

Student: So what can I do if I'm being bullied?

Dr Carr-Gregg: If you're being bullied face-to-face you can try some of these responses. Remember these are first stage responses. You may have already tried some of them.

For example, use a firm voice and tell the person who is bullying you to stop.

Use neutral language: this is where you use words that don't tell the person what you're really thinking or whether you agree or disagree with them. Neutral responses like 'maybe' or 'that's what you think' don't give the student who is bullying you any power.

Student: I don't think I could say anything if I was being bullied... is there some other way to deal with it?

Dr Carr-Gregg: Try to act unimpressed. This is where you use your face and body to show the student who is bullying you that you are not going to have anything to do with them. You could turn your back on them or you could turn your body so you are not making any eye contact with them.

Bullying is something that keeps happening over time, not just one incident. It can be very helpful if you write down where and when the bullying has happened because it can be hard to remember these details if you become upset.

If these strategies don't work then it is time to tell someone. If you are being bullied, tell a friend, tell a teacher or tell your parents.

Student: Why do I need to tell someone? It's so hard to talk about it.

Dr Carr-Gregg: The tough reality is that the bullying probably won't stop unless you do this. It can be hard so if you don't feel you can do it in person, it might be easier to write a note to your parents explaining how you feel, or perhaps confide in someone outside your immediate family, like a grandparent, aunt, uncle or cousin and ask them to help you tell your parents what's going on.

Students who bully others can get power because no one tells and this keeps the bullying secret. However they are not so brave when they are identified and their behaviour is challenged by people in authority, like other adults or teachers and they have to explain their actions. Your teachers need to know what is going on, so try to find a time to see them, preferably in private.

Student: How can I tell the teacher without anyone knowing what I'm doing?

Dr Carr-Gregg: You could stay behind pretending that you need help with some work. If you don't feel you can do that, then go to the sick bay and speak to the school nurse. The best response is if a teacher can catch the bullies in the act. That way, you won't get into bother from anyone for dobbing. It will be clear to everyone what has been going on.

Don't be tempted to hit back because you could get hurt or get into trouble.

Student: I'm not being bullied in person – it's all online. What do I do when I get nasty messages online?

Dr Carr-Gregg: If you are being cyberbullied try these strategies:

- Don't respond to the message or image.
- Save the evidence.
- Block and delete the sender
- Report the situation to the website or Internet Service Provider
- Tell trusted people - friends, adults, teachers, parents and police if necessary.

There are people that can help you. Bullying hurts and it should not be part of anyone's life when they are growing up. If it is happening to you, tell someone.

Student: What if I just want to get help on my own?

Dr Carr-Gregg: If you need to know more, or you need to speak to someone there are always people who can help. You can ring a helpline or book some online counselling. Web counselling lets you connect one-on-one, real time, with

a Kids Helpline counsellor, over the web. Web counselling is open 7 days a week. Because a lot of people use web counselling, there can be a little bit of a wait, before a counsellor is available. If you need to talk to someone now, call Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.