

Everyone needs to know that it's not OK to bully,
it's not OK to be bullied, and it's not OK to watch someone bully
or be bullied and do nothing about it.

6

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

School can have a really big effect on how you see yourself and the world around you; bad experiences in school can sometimes cause stress, anxiety and depression.

Your sense of identity is important to your mental health. It is shaped by events in your life, and can impact on your thoughts, behaviour and ability to cope with tough times.

A lot of people have had one or more bad experiences in school that made them angry or upset, but when the problems just won't stop and are getting worse, it can have a major impact on your self esteem.

Some people think that bullying is just a part of growing up, and that you have to just 'hack it until it's over'. But there **are** things you can do about it.

Dealing with bullying in school is tricky. Most of us have heard solutions to the problem, like **"talk to the bully, tell them how teasing you makes you feel"** or **"ignore them, they will eventually get bored and stop it"**

But it's not always that easy.

If you're getting bullied at school it may seem like it's never going to end. Try and remember, that you are stronger than you probably realise. You can look to your family, friends and other things in your life that make you happy to find more strength. Try talking to your parents/carers about what's happening. They may have some good advice for you and be able to raise the issue with your school and work with the teachers to find some solutions to the problem.

All students need to be made aware of the short and long term effects that bullying and harassment in school can have on a person, and the benefits of a positive school environment. If you believe that bullying and harassment is a problem in your school, a really good idea would be to approach your teachers about giving talks for all students aimed at creating a good school environment. Training should be held regularly, so that students are made aware of the issue and reminded to keep the school environment positive.

Everyone needs to know that it's not OK to bully, it's not OK to be bullied, and it's not OK to watch someone bully or be bullied and do nothing about it.

Training sessions should be aimed at creating a school environment which:

- Encourages caring, respectful relationships
- Offers respect, leadership, and builds on the strengths of each person
- Provides chances for participation and teamwork
- Is respectful, includes everyone, is safe and supportive, and free from unfairness and discrimination

This strategy is based on an approach used in **MindMatters: A mental health promotion resource for secondary schools**. All secondary schools in the Northern Territory have this information kit, so the resources for your teachers to use are already in your school.

