

# Bullying and suicide



*Bullying is a conscious, willful, deliberate, repeated and hostile activity marked by an imbalance of power, intent to harm and/or threat of aggression.”*

(Alberta Human Services, 2015)

## Types of bullying

### VERBAL BULLYING

- sarcasm;
- threats;
- negative, insulting, or humiliating comments; or
- unwanted sexual comments.

### SOCIAL BULLYING

- spreading rumours or damaging someone's reputation;
- excluding others from a group;
- humiliating others with public gestures or graffiti; or
- damaging someone's friendships.

### PHYSICAL BULLYING

- intentional physical aggression towards another person;
- destroying or stealing belongings; or
- unwanted sexual touching.

### CYBERBULLYING

- Using electronic communication (e.g., internet, social media or text messaging) to:
  - » intimidate;
  - » put-down;
  - » spread rumours;
  - » make fun of someone; or
  - » disseminate private or embarrassing information or images of a person without their permission (Alberta Human Services, 2015).

Cyber bullying victims are

**2x**

more likely to attempt suicide (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010).

## What is it?

Bullying is related to negative psychological, emotional and behavioural outcomes. These outcomes can eventually make youth feel as though they can no longer cope (Wade & Beran, 2011).

Bullying is linked to several precursors to thoughts of suicide (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010):

- depression and hopelessness;
- low self-esteem;
- loneliness and isolation;
- anger and frustration;
- humiliation;
- embarrassment; or
- trauma.

**85%**

of bullying takes place in front of other people (Craig & Pepler, 1997).

When bullying is accompanied by other risk factors, it often causes suicidal ideation (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Olson, 2012; Holt et al., 2015). Risk factors for suicidal ideation include:

- bullying;
- sexual abuse;
- physical abuse;
- drug abuse; or
- depression.

Both bullying victims and those who perpetuate bullying are at a higher risk for suicide. Kids who are involved as both victims and perpetrators of bullying are at the highest risk for suicide (Holt et al, 2015, Suicide Prevention Resource Center, n.d).

Because of the strong connection between bullying and suicide, the development of bullying prevention and intervention programs is vital (van Geel, et al., 2014).

## Helping out

### What to do if a youth is being bullied or in emotional distress or suicidal

#### ADVICE FOR ADULTS – IF A YOUTH IS BEING BULLIED:

- Offer comfort and support; tell youth they are safe.
- Ask whoever oversees the group in which the bullying happens to monitor the situation.
- Make arrangements for the victim to be safe, either with an adult or older child near where the bullying takes place.
- Help develop confidence, build self-esteem and encourage communication (Alberta Human Services, 2015).

#### ADVICE FOR ADULTS – IF THE BULLYING VICTIM IS SUICIDAL:

- Ask the bullying victim directly if they are thinking of killing themselves.
- If they say yes, connect them with help immediately. Call your local crisis centre, and connect them with the suicidal youth.
- If the youth tells you they have a plan of how they will kill themselves, call 9-1-1 (Centre for Suicide Prevention, 2015).

#### ADVICE FOR YOUTH:

- If you see someone being bullied, decide on the safest course of action and act. You might tell the person who is bullying to stop, and/or offer the victim help, and/or seek help from an adult.
- If you are being bullied, stand up for yourself by looking confident, making eye-contact, and using a calm but assertive tone. Tell the bully to stop, then walk away. Seek help from an adult. Do not keep bullying a secret (PREVNet.ca, n.d.).

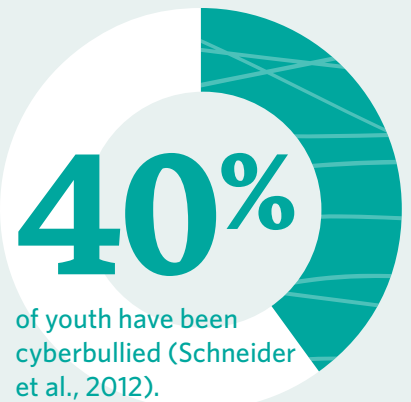
1 in 3

youth are bullied (Statistics Canada, 2012).

LGBTQ students experience discrimination

3x

more frequently than their heterosexual peers (Canadian Institute of Health Research, 2012).



## RESOURCES

#### FOR PARENTS

- *Indigenous Youth Cyberbullying Special Feature*, Centre for Suicide Prevention [csprev.ca/2bZXxVe](http://csprev.ca/2bZXxVe)
- *Cyberbullying Special Feature*, Centre for Suicide Prevention [csprev.ca/2c00h4l](http://csprev.ca/2c00h4l)
- [B-Free.ca](http://B-Free.ca)
- [BullyFreeAlberta.ca](http://BullyFreeAlberta.ca)
- [PREVNet.ca](http://PREVNet.ca)

#### FOR YOUTH

- [KidsHelpPhone.ca](http://KidsHelpPhone.ca) 1 (800) 668-6868
- [B-Free.ca](http://B-Free.ca)
- [BullyFreeAlberta.ca](http://BullyFreeAlberta.ca)
- [PREVNet.ca](http://PREVNet.ca)

#### FOR SCHOOLS

- [KindCampaign.com](http://KindCampaign.com)
- [StopABully.ca](http://StopABully.ca)
- [PREVNet.ca](http://PREVNet.ca)



FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
VISIT [SUICIDEINFO.CA](http://SUICIDEINFO.CA)



Commission de  
la santé mentale  
du Canada



Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
Mental health for all



centre for  
suicide prevention

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Health Canada  
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### ABOUT THE CENTRE FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

**Anyone** can learn to identify someone at risk of suicide and get them help.

#### Call us.

We are the Centre for Suicide Prevention. For 35+ years we've been equipping Canadians with knowledge and skills to respond to people at risk of suicide. We can equip you too. We educate for life.

### ABOUT THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION OF CANADA

The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) is a catalyst for improving the mental health system and changing the attitudes and behaviours of Canadians around mental health issues.

### ABOUT THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

The Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention (CASP) was incorporated in 1985 by a group of professionals who saw the need to provide information and resources to communities to reduce the suicide rate and minimize the harmful consequences of suicidal behaviour.

**If you are in crisis, call your local crisis line.**

[suicideprevention.ca/need-help](http://suicideprevention.ca/need-help)



FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
VISIT [SUICIDEINFO.CA](http://SUICIDEINFO.CA)



Mental Health  
Commission  
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Commission de  
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CASP/ACPS



Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
Mental health for all



centre for  
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