

How can peers, parents, schools and new media stop bullying?

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A new review of research out today outlines roles and recommendations for peers, parents, schools and new media platforms to stop bullying. This review was published in *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, a Federation of Associations in Behavioral & Brain Sciences (FABBS) journal published in partnership with SAGE Publishing.

"The fact that there are so many ways to intervene provides hope for stopping bullying and its negative effects," wrote study author Dr. Amy Bellmore. "Yet even with a mound of evidence about what may work, we still face many challenges to implementing these changes, as the most effective approaches are likely to require action on many fronts."

Building on more than 20 years of bullying research, Bellmore constructs a multi-tiered approach to stop bullying, with [recommendations](#) for four stakeholders:

Peers Higher levels of bullying are reported in classrooms where victims are not defended by their peers than in classrooms where students intervene on the victims' behalf. Students can defend victims by sharing their emotional reactions, offering support and helping to shape peaceful alternatives. In addition, students should be informed that adults can help stop bullying only when they see or hear about specific instances. Though students have a role in stopping bullying, the overall process must be instigated and supported by adults within [school](#) and at home.

ParentsChildren that have warm relationships with their [parents](#) are less likely to become bullies or victims, compared to children that have neglectful or abusive parents. To help reduce bullying, schools or communities could provide training in relevant parental skills to help facilitate communication about incidents of bullying occurring in schools. Such training may also be effective for parents whose children are not at risk of becoming bullies or being bullied as it could help parents encourage their children to defend their [peers](#).

Schools The school-based anti-bullying programs that have been most successful at reducing bullying and victimization are those that last longer, have more intensive interventions and many components, such as school rules, discipline, playground supervision and parent informational and training meetings. When deciding on whether or not to implement anti-bullying programs, schools should view their efforts to reduce bullying as promoting a positive school climate for all students as focusing on wide-ranging benefits will help motivate schools that are concerned about limited time and resources. Schools should select bullying intervention programs that have evidence of success, implement the programs with caution and evaluate success within their specific context and among their students.

New Media PlatformsLaw enforcement may not get involved in cyberbullying unless it results in such behavior as harassment and threats and schools are still seeking guidance in determining their level of involvement; however, the public opinion is that companies running social media platforms have some culpability. To ensure the safety of its users, some large social media sites offer resource pages dedicated to [bullying](#), instructions for blocking accounts of bullies and reporting mechanisms for users to report online abuse.

"Bullying is not a harmless rite of passage for children," continued Bellmore. "Bullying is destructive to youth who experience it directly, to

the schools in which it resides, and to the broader public."

More information: "Whose Responsibility Is It to Stop Bullying?" in *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 2016.

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