

### What is National Bullying Prevention Month?

The goal of National Bullying Prevention Month is to encourage communities to work together to stop bullying and cyberbullying by increasing awareness of the prevalence and impact of bullying on all children of all ages. In a 2015 nationwide survey, 20 percent of high school students reported being bullied on school property in the 12 months preceding the survey.

### What is bullying?

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior must include:

- **An imbalance of power:** Persons who bully use their power—physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- **Repetition:** Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

### Three types of bullying

1. **Verbal:** Saying or writing mean things, making threats, spreading rumors.
2. **Social:** Sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships, excluding someone from a group on purpose.
3. **Physical:** Hurting a person's body or possessions.

### Apps for your smartphone

- [KnowBullying](#)
- [CyberBully Hotline](#)
- [Bully Tag](#)

### Tips from our docs

This month, our healthy tip is brought to you by **Kiko Torres, MD**, NMHC's Senior Medical Director.

The effects of bullying are substantial for both bullies and their victims. Students who experience bullying are at increased risk for poor school adjustment, sleep difficulties, anxiety, and depression. They are also twice as likely as non-bullied peers to have negative health effects such as headaches and stomachaches. Bullies are at increased risk for academic problems, substance use, and violent behavior later in adolescence and adulthood.

The ultimate goal is to stop bullying before it starts. Parents, school staff, and other caring adults have a role to play in preventing bullying. They can:

- **Help people understand bullying.** Talk about what bullying is and how to stand up to it safely. Tell kids bullying is unacceptable. Make sure kids know how to get help.
- **Keep the lines of communication open.** Check in with kids often. Listen to them. Know their friends, ask about school, and understand their concerns.
- **Encourage kids to do what they love.** Special activities, interests, and hobbies can boost confidence, help kids make friends, and protect them from bullying behavior.
- **Model how to treat others with kindness and respect.**

Find lots of information and resources on behavioral health on our [website](#). Don't forget, NMHC offers a \$0 copay for the first three behavioral health office visits (and all behavioral health office visits starting in 2017).

### Additional resources

- [Pacer's National Bullying Prevention Center](#)
- [Stopbullying.gov](#)
- [Stomp Out Bullying](#)