

Insight Community Project is committed to providing a safe and positive environment for all of our members. Bullying of any kind is not tolerated. We strive to provide an environment where every person feels comfortable, safe, and free from harm. We work hard to encourage confidence and self-esteem and do not accept bullying in any form, or towards any person.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is repeated behaviour which makes children, young people and others feel uncomfortable or threatened whether this is intended or not.

Bullying can lead to life-long mental and physical health issues and can even result in someone taking their own life.

There are different sorts of bullying, but the main types being:

- Physical - Hitting, kicking, taking or hiding belongings including money.
- Verbal - Name calling, teasing, insulting, writing unkind notes.
- Emotional - Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, spreading rumours, looks.
- Cyber - All areas of internet, such as email and social media misuse.
- Mobile - Threats by text messaging, calls or video calling.

It is important to understand that we cannot always categorise bullying as it can be individual to a person and how it makes that person feel. A comment or action towards one person may affect them differently than it does another person.

It is not always possible to tell if someone is hurt or upset because people react in different ways. It is important that staff and volunteers are aware of the possible signs that a person is being bullied and feel confident in dealing with this.

Service users who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, refusing to attend sessions, wanting to leave sessions before the end or quickly before others have the chance to leave, not taking part in activities with others, becoming visibly upset, not having their belongings with them that they would usually have such as a mobile phone, physical injuries such as cuts or bruises.

It is important we create an environment where service users who are being bullied, or others who know about it feel that they will be listened to and believed, and that action taken to deal with the incident in a thorough but sensitive nature. It is important that service users are aware that not telling someone protects the bully or bullies and gives the message that they can continue, perhaps bullying others too. Service users are encouraged to tell someone they feel comfortable with such as their activity leader, who can then support them and help resolve the situation.

Dealing with a report of bullying

Initially it is important that the staff member dealing with the issue makes it clear to the bully that their behaviour is unacceptable, and has caused distress. It is also important that the person who is being bullied is supported and is encouraged not to display bullying behaviour back.

All efforts will be made to deal with the issue within the organisation, however, if it comes to a point where the situation is not being resolved, parents will be informed and sanctions will be put in place. These sanctions will be decided by members of staff dealing with the situation and will be reviewed as appropriate. If all other efforts fail to resolve the issue service users may be asked to leave the project. In cases where a criminal offence has taken place the police will be informed and staff members will support the police in their investigations.

If a parent / carer believes that their son/daughter or someone they know is experiencing bullying both within or outside of the Insight Community Project, we encourage you to inform a member of the team who will then support you and the victim.

Policy written by: Carly Ferron

Date written: 10th July 2020

Date last reviewed: 16th February 2024

Date policy to be reviewed: 16th February 2025