

## CAUSES OF BULLYING

- Insecurity/feelings of inadequacy – bullies put others down to make themselves look or feel better
- Competition – a need to be the “best” makes bullies sabotage others’ efforts to excel; they tend to target those with traits that they want themselves (i.e. intelligence, popularity)
- Poor problem solving or communication skills – they don’t see ways to deal with their emotions or a conflict other than hurting others
- Seeking attention, positive or negative, from others around them
- Learned bullying behavior at home may make kids act out as bullies at school
- Being bullied in one environment can turn someone into a bully in a different environment in effort of gaining back their sense of power and control
- Poor empathy skills, poor forethought may make some bullies act without realizing how hurtful they are being
- Fear of being bullied by others may make someone become a bully themselves to avoid becoming a target

## EFFECTS OF BEING BULLIED

- Targets feel isolated, hurt, confused, scared...
- Targets may believe the bully and experience decreased self-esteem
- Withdrawing socially
- Fear going to school/work/activities where the bully is
- Unexplained bruises or cuts
- Dropping grades
- Drinking, drug use, or self-harm to cope with the pain
- Suicidal thoughts or actions in effort to escape the bully

## HOW TO RESPOND WHEN BULLIED

- Tell someone (kids: tell an adult; adults – tell HR, tell a safe friend)
- Bullies want a response, so you can avoid satisfying them by walking away, appearing unimpressed, or using assertive (not aggressive!) communication with them
- Be a friend to a target of bullying
- Stand up to the bully by simply telling them to stop what they’re doing
- Find other friends or activities to be a part of instead of being around the bully
- If you need to interact with the bully regularly, try to communicate in writing so that you have evidence
- Do what you need to do to protect yourself and stay safe
- Seek support from family, friends, and/or a therapist
- Contact law enforcement or a crisis line if needed

*\*Psychology Today, The Bully Project, Stomp Out Bullying*