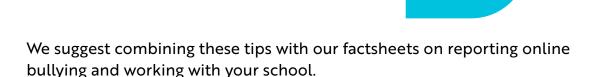


Supporting teens who've been bullied



1. Stay safe

If anyone is in immediate danger, call triple zero (000).

2. Have a good talk

- Find a comfortable place where you won't be interrupted.
- Stay calm. If you're feeling overwhelmed, step away and collect
- your thoughts.
- Encourage your teen to tell you the whole story. Let them take their time.
- Listen carefully, without interrupting.
- Sum up the story to check you've understood.
- Reassure them that you're glad they told you and they don't deserve
- to be bullied.
- Show them empathy, eg. "I can see this has been really hard on you".
- Don't be judgmental or dismissive. Avoid saying things like "why didn't you stand up for yourself?" or "everyone gets bullied, it's no big deal".
- Ask what end result they want. They might just want the bullying to stop.
- Promise you'll do everything you can to find a solution with them.
- Remind them that lots of people recover from bullying and go on to live happy lives.

3. Get organised

- Help your teen make a record of what happened where, when, who
- was involved, who witnessed it, how your teen responded, and screenshots or pics of evidence.
- Talk about how you could tell the school without causing your teen stress.
 For example, you could talk quietly with the teacher when no students are around.
- Explain that you'll be guided by what your teen wants as much as possible, but your first priority is keeping them safe.

4. Talk tactics with the school

Some teens manage to shut down social or verbal bullying by the following.

- Acting unimpressed, bored, sarcastic or nonchalant.
- Saying neutral things like "whatever", "OK", or "that's what you think".
- Using confident voice and body language.
- Distracting people, eg. with a joke or an unexpected question.
- If it's safe, calmly confronting the person, eg. "don't speak to me like that".
- Moving to a part of the school that's safer and more supervised.
- Telling someone sympathetic, eg. a peer mentor, school nurse or sports coach.

5. Support your teen's wellbeing

- Encourage regular sleeping patterns, regular exercise and healthy eating habits.
- Help your teen to identify things that help them to calm down or cheer up, eg. playing music, keeping a diary, running, looking after pets – and do them each day.
- Explore age-appropriate programs or apps about mindfulness and meditation such as headspace.org.au/blog/how-to-meditate/

6. Talk to someone who will support you, such as a parent, GP, or mentor You can speak to a mental health professional for free on the Dolly's Dream support line – 0488 881 033. For a full list of support services click here.

7. Be smart about tech

- Don't force teens to give up their devices, as this might make them
- keep secrets from you in the future.
- Talk with your teen about how to manage their tech use to reduce stress.
 For example, you might agree as a family to stop using tech at bedtime,
 stick to online spaces that are friendly and positive, or take a break from tech on certain days.
- Check your teen knows how to mute, block, unfollow, unfriend, hide content, or take a break from people online. See <u>esafety.gov.au/key-issues/esafety-guide</u>
- Report serious online bullying to the website and, if that doesn't work,
- to the eSafety Commissioner: esafety.gov.au/report
- Remind your teens not to retaliate with their own negative posts.
 Encourage them to put the tech down, calm down, talk to someone,
- then decide what to do.
- If the negative messages are coming from someone your teen knows in person and wants to stay friends with, encourage them to talk calmly in private, face-to-face.

8. Strengthen your teen's friendships

- If your teen has caring friends, encourage them to spend time together.
- If not, help your teen identify people they might make friends with, eg. new students, students who share their interests, or students who are friendly and kind.
- Ask the school if they offer organised lunchtime or after-school activities.
- Find opportunities for your teen to meet people and build skills and confidence, eg. volunteering, part-time jobs, sport, art classes, Scouts, adventure activities, mentoring programs, or martial arts classes with a focus on peace and wellbeing.

9. Keep your family strong

- Eat together regularly and celebrate things like birthdays and cultural festivals.
- Do fun things together, like going to the beach or the park.
- Encourage your family to reflect every day on something that went well, something they're proud of, and something they're grateful for.
- Encourage your teens to solve problems and make decisions. Praise their successes and help them see the positive impacts of their actions.
- Make sure family rules are clear, consistent and fair. Use reasonable supervision.
- Encourage siblings to spend positive time together and help each
- other out.
- Remind your teens of their good qualities and why you're proud of them.

