





the bullying continues or occurs in places where youth are unable to avoid or ignore it. If the bullying is more persistent and threatening, more assertive strategies may be needed.

An assertive strategy is for your teen to practice standing up straight and saying loudly, *Stop doing \_\_\_\_\_ to me!* Shouting brings attention to adults and others so that they can hear what is happening. Being assertive lets the bully know that you do not like how he/she is treating you.

Depending on the personality of your teen and the situation, humor or sarcasm may be helpful to disarm the bully. For example, Bully: *Everybody hates you!* Target: *Really? That's interesting. Why do you think that? Or, I'm pretty sure you don't know everyone, so that's not true.*

Whatever strategies are used, keep in mind that contacting the bully or his/her parents/guardians often backfires. Focus instead on what you can do to help your teen and how you can work with the school to tackle the problem. Try different approaches and keep the conversation going.

## Keep Track of Improvement

It is important to check in with your teen to see if the plan worked and to make any necessary changes. Additional follow-up conversations can help you determine if further action is needed.

Keep in mind, even the best advice may not yield the outcomes that you and your teen desire. If the plan does not work, don't give up. You may need to call, send an email or letter, and even meet with school administrators, counselors, and teachers.

It can be helpful for both you and your teen to keep a daily journal that summarizes conversations and issues at school, suggestions that were made, strategies used to stop the bullying, and if and how they helped.

## Conclusion

When youth experience bullying, it can take a toll on them and their families. Whatever the circumstance, it is crucial never to blame the victim.

Even after you create strategies to help your teen deal with bullying behaviors, there is no guarantee that those efforts will be successful. Still, you play an important role in helping your teen cope with and manage bullying situations. Through whatever challenges are faced and whatever assaults on self-esteem and worthiness are experienced, reassure your teen of his/her value. Show your teen that he/she is loved and cherished.

All youth have strengths and interests that can be encouraged. Encouragement can help to soften the blows to self-esteem that often follow bullying. Caring, supportive, and proactive responses are the most beneficial actions you can take to help your teen deal with ongoing bullying.



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