



HOW TO ADDRESS BULLYING AT CAMP

A resource on bullying and what you as a **COUNSELLOR** can do- from recognizing the signs of bullying and how to prevent/respond to bullying.



For more information, visit <https://www.prevnet.ca>

What is Bullying?

- Repeated, unwanted aggressive behaviour(s) by a youth or group of youths
- Involves an observed or perceived power imbalance based on differences in
 - Size
 - Strength
 - Ability
 - Popularity
 - Appearance/body size
 - Race/ethnicity
 - Religion
 - Class
 - Sexual orientation
 - Identity/expression
 - Gender
 - Culture
 - Any other difference
- Occurs most often when few adults are around
- Is a relationship problem: Over time, the person who is bullying feels more and more powerful and the person who is being bullied feels more and more helpless, shamed, and trapped
- Results in physical, social, or educational harm or distress in targeted youth
- Requires relationship solutions- solutions that create safety and social-emotional growth for all involved



Signs of Bullying

- | Being bullied | vs . | Bullying others |
|---|------|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afraid of going to camp & other activities • Appears anxious • Low self-esteem & makes negative comments • Less interest in activities • Complains about feeling unwell • Threats to hurt themselves or others • Isolated from peer group • Loses things, needs money, reports being hungry after camp | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aggressive with parents, siblings, or friends • Low concern for others' feelings • Bossy & manipulative behaviour • Unexplained possession of money & objects • Secretive about possessions & activities • Holds a positive view about aggression • Easily frustrated & quick to anger • Does not recognize impact of his/her behaviour |

What can you do?

Creating a Safe Space



Create a Warm & Inclusive Environment

Tell your campers that everyone is at camp to have a great time. Explain that everyone at camp has the right to feel respected, and everyone has the responsibility to show respect for others.



Establish a Code of Conduct

At the beginning of each session, develop a set of rules that defines positive and respectful behaviours for your group. Post these rules in a visible location. Key examples: be nice, include everyone, invite others to play, listen, help others when they have a problem, encourage others to try their best, play fairly, take turns being the leader, etc.



Reinforce Positive Behaviours

As a counsellor, constantly monitor your group's interactions. Whenever you see respectful and positive social behaviour, describe and praise it: "Hey, that was such a kind thing to say!" When you observe a negative behaviour, immediately address it with reference to the rules: "Hey Tyler, what you just said was not okay. Remember, we need to encourage everyone to try their best." "Hey campers, let's listen respectfully when someone is talking!"



Assign Groups

Counsellors should always assign campers to smaller groups, teams, and partners. This promotes inclusion, group cohesion, and positive interactions. It ensures that no campers are left out, or embarrassed by being chosen last, or being in a group in which they may be bullied. It is fine to assign campers to be with their friends but try to build new connections by mixing things up.



Intervene Early

Nip disrespectful interactions in the bud, so that bullying interactions can not take root. As a counsellor, be aware of group dynamics: Who are friends, who are alone, who always leads, who is vulnerable? Act when you see negative interactions such as put-downs and criticism, bossy or excluding behaviour (which can be nonverbal), negative gossiping and telling secrets, etc. Act in the moment by labelling the behaviour as unacceptable. If it continues, provide private support to the involved campers.

What can you do?

Encouraging Empathy



When addressing a camper who has bullied, the important thing is to help them learn from the experience. Consequences that TEACH rather than punish provide a clear message that bullying is unacceptable while helping the campers understand the impact of their actions on others.

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Talk with campers about how everyone is different in some way and everyone has different strengths and weaknesses. Everyone should respect differences and never make another camper feel bad about being different.

Talk with campers about how everyone feels the same emotions or feelings. Help campers label different emotions and how to identify them in themselves and in other people. Talk about facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language. Discuss "hard emotions": shame, embarrassment, anger, fear, and sadness.

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Discuss ways campers can help each other when they experience these hard emotions. Examples are: cheering someone up, encouraging someone to keep on trying, inviting someone to join in and do something fun.

Hold a discussion of bullying and define bullying in a way that fits your campers' developmental level. Have campers identify examples of bullying in the media, stories, books, movies, etc. Discuss how these stories make them feel.

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Have campers interview a parent, older sibling, or trusted adult about their bullying experiences and the impact it had on them.

What can you do?

Helping those who are Bullied

Encourage Reporting

- Ensure your campers know that it is a counsellor's job to deal with bullying, and that they should report bullying if it happens to them, or someone else.
- Clarify the difference between tattling and seeking help: tattling is what you do to get someone in trouble; seeking help is what you do to get someone out of trouble
- Provide alternative ways to report bullying i.e. An anonymous bullying box
- Be ready to listen: Enthusiastically thank the camper for coming to you and acknowledge that this is the right thing to do. Tell the camper you will work together to solve the problem.



Build Self-Esteem

- Encourage campers who are bullied to participate in activities they enjoy to help build self-esteem
- When campers are participating in new or challenging activities, identify step-by-step goals and encourage them to focus on their own growth

Help the Camper Stand-up for Themselves

- Practice these skills through your own modeling of assertive behaviours and role playing with the camper. Skills include:
 - Looking someone in the eye
 - Saying in a firm voice: "Please stop doing that."
 - Sending I messages, e.g., "I don't like it when you [tease me/go in front of me/ignore my ideas/etc]. It makes me feel [bad/frustrated/hurt/etc.]. If you don't stop I'm going to seek help from the counsellor/keep on reporting it/tell my parents/etc."

Connect Campers to Other Peers

- Identify other campers who are gentle, supportive, and assign the camper to small group activities with these selected peers.
- Find activities for these small groups that will be fun and require peer interaction (e.g., interviewing each other about favourite things, playing cards or board games).
- If necessary, stay with the camper and the new peers to provide "social coaching" (e.g., give hints, and help smooth out rough spots).



What can you do?

Helping those who Bully

Change the Way they use their Power

- Provide them with opportunities to use their natural leadership skills in a positive way, i.e., get them to teach younger campers a new sport or skill.

Consequences that Teach, not Punish

- Campers who bully need help in understanding the impact of their actions
- This could be through reflecting on the consequences of their behaviour (i.e. Will this impact my learning and success?)



Develop their positive problem-solving skills

- Bullying is a relationship problem that can be solved in a non-confrontation manner where campers involved have their interests met
- Teach through role-playing, and discussions that encourage empathy
- Tell camper(s) you are confident that they can be more respectful, and that you will be watching them closely as well as regularly checking in with the camper who was bullied.
- Provide enthusiastic reinforcement for the positive changes you see in their behaviour.

