

Support for a Child Who Is Bullying Others

Fixit hears the phone ring and picks it up. Fones enters the room, laughing at a cell phone video. Fixit looks at the image on the phone of Spotty, looking very concerned. Fones suddenly changes expression, and when Fixit sees that Fones is feeling badly, the two talk together about it. Fones deletes the video and the next day apologizes to Spotty.

Narrated Message // *It can be hard to discover your child is bullying others. During difficult moments with our children, it is even more important that we, ourselves, become positive role models. As adults, we can take responsibility for our actions and encourage our children to do the same. We can reassure them that they can change. These are important learning opportunities. Helping guide our children toward reflection and making better choices shows them that we believe in their ability to change. Our belief in them can mean everything.*

IDEAS

- We can make sure that our children understand that their bullying behaviour is wrong and hurts others, while making sure they know we are there for them. We can ask questions to help children think about how the person they bullied might be feeling right now.
- We can try to understand why they are bullying. We can stay calm, taking time to breathe and manage our feelings when learning and thinking about what has happened. Thinking about what to do when we learn that our children have been bullying others, in a thoughtful and reflective way, ensures that we are positive role models.
- We can believe and communicate that our children can change and repair this situation—making use of this important learning opportunity. Helping our children think about and change their behaviour helps them grow as a person. We can remind ourselves that everyone makes mistakes and that making it right is possible.
- Using empowerment listening techniques to better understand the behaviour. Helping our children to change and fix the harm done. Helping children to think of their own ideas for next steps to fix the situation, while being respectful of the child who has been bullied.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

Family Members

1. What are some of the messages in this film?
2. What are some of the feelings you might have if you learned your child is bullying others? Who could you go to for help?
3. How can you listen in a way that will help you understand why your child is bullying others?
4. How could you let your child know you don't like their bullying, but still care about them and believe in their ability to change?
5. What questions could you ask your child to help them find ways to think about and fix the situation?
6. Do you have any personal stories to share?

School Staff and Community Leaders

1. What are some of the challenges you face when you need to tell a parent that their child has been bullying others?
2. How can you and your school provide support to a parent in this kind of situation?
3. What have you found beneficial in helping a student who has been bullying understand the harmful impact of their behaviour, or ways to repair the situation? How can we help other children involved?
4. What are additional responses that might further support and meet the specific needs of Aboriginal children and family members in this instance?
5. Does your school have any ongoing anti-bullying programs or processes in place? If yes, what kinds of activities, interventions and support do you offer students who have been bullying others?
6. What steps can we take to avoid shame and blame and then work toward a real change? How can we help students who are bullying learn to reflect, learn, grow and change?