

Friendships can sometimes be complicated in high school.



Friendships in high school are a lot of fun when things are going great, but if things aren't going so well, it can be really confusing and upsetting.



When things aren't going too well with friendships, it can help to know what to do and how to cope. This is especially important if bullying is occurring.

Sometimes friends fight and say things that aren't so nice.



Or maybe a friend might say something unkind behind your back. Or be inconsiderate and boast about something when they know you're not as good as them at that. Or maybe they'll invite some friends over, but not include ALL of their friends.

These things might hurt a little, but if it's a one-off or only occasionally happens, then while it may not be particularly kind...

IT ISN'T BULLYING.

Bullying is when another person, or a group of people, deliberately and repeatedly hurt someone by saying mean things about them, threatening them, physically hurting them, isolating and excluding them, or spreading rumours about them.





When you have a disability it can feel like people don't like you because of that disability. Like you just don't fit anywhere. It can feel like there's no one like you, and you will never have real friends.

You might feel scared, or very sad and down and isolated.

This is a normal reaction to a difficult and wrong situation. friendships can sometimes feel like the most important thing during the teenage years. Bullying disrupts friendships and threatens wellbeing, so it is only natural for your body to react with a range of emotions.

Sometimes it can feel like the bullying will never end. No matter how alone you might feel, or how frightened or sad, there are always people out there who can help, and things you can do.

Tell the person or people who are bullying you that what they are doing is not right. Don't retaliate, but make it clear to them that their actions are not right. This can take a lot of courage, but sometimes speaking up is all it takes to stop them from doing it again.

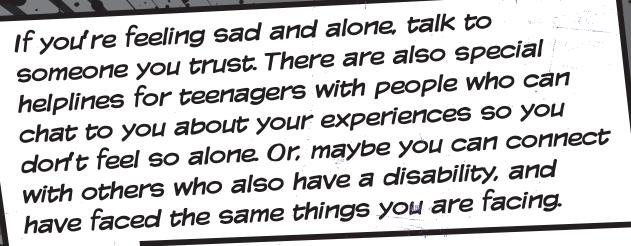
If you're being bullied online, switch the device off, and walk away.

Ask for help. It can be really scary to ask for help when you're being bullied. You might be scared that it will make things worse. But bullying is never ok. It's ok to protect yourself from bullying. Plus if someone is bullying you, then they are likely to bully others... if not now, then later down the track. By letting a teacher or parent know what is happening, you are protecting yourself AND protecting others from going through the same thing you're going through.

If you are feeling isolated and alone at school, there are a few things you can do. You can see if there are any lunch time clubs you can be involved in, or other groups you can be involved in.

You can ask a teacher or someone from your school wellbeing team for support in making friends.

And you could also get involved in after school activities. Building friendships outside of school can be a nice reminder that there is also a world out there beyond school!



Do things to look after yourself.
Listen to soothing music that you
like, have a bath with extra bubbles,
go for a run, play with a pet... do
something each day to help yourself
relax and help your body unwind a
little from dealing with all those
emotions and stresses!



For example, change those negative thoughts to "right now I'm struggling a little with friends, but that doesn't mean I'll never have friends. It just might take me a bit longer to find 'my people'. Things are difficult now, but they can get better, and who knows what great things might be in my future!"

Remind yourself that bullying happens to many different people – celebrities such as Ed Sheeran, Jackie Chan and Rihanna say that they were bullied at school! Bullying is not a sign that there is something wrong with you.

REMEMBER, bullying is never ok. Your school wants you to have positive experiences at school in which you learn and grow as a person. If you are experiencing bullying, reach out.

About this story:

Bullying can have significant effects on a teenager's wellbeing. Children with disabilities are more likely to be bullied at school because they may look or act differently to other children.

This comic/story is designed for teenagers without intellectual disability, and includes information to support them in defining what bullying is, and evidence-based strategies for how to manage bullying if it happens to them.

Common emotional reactions to bullying are acknowledged and normalized, and practical responses to stop bullying from continuing are identified. Further, a range of positive coping strategies such as activating social supports, engaging in self-care and challenging cognitive distortions are described.

For more stories and information on making education accessible for everyone please visit: allplaylearn.org.au





Copyright 2019. Deakin University

Except as permitted under your local Copyright Act, no part of this material may be reproduced by any process, electronic or otherwise, without the specific written permission of Deakin University.

For permission to reproduce this material please contact: copyright@deakin.edu.au.

AllPlay Learn was supported by the Victorian Government.

