

Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

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Proposed publication date: March 18, 2019
Content provided by: Alberta Health Services

Talking to your teen about bullying

Teens can be under a lot of pressure as they deal with hormonal changes, heartbreaks, anxiety about school, relationships, etc. With so much going on in your teen's life, it is important to watch for signs that they may be struggling with bullying. If your teen seems unusually anxious, worried about going to school or withdrawn, take some time to check in and let them know you are there to support them. Bullying can take different forms:

- **Verbal:** name calling, gossiping and negative comments about a person's interests or background (e.g. culture, race, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation).
- **Physical:** hitting, tripping, pinching and unwanted sexual touching.
- **Social:** leaving someone out on purpose, telling others not to be friends and spreading rumors.
- **Cyber:** the use of email, text messages, social media and internet sites to socially exclude, embarrass and damage reputations and relationships.

What to do if you suspect your teen is being bullied?

- Start the conversation. Talk often and openly.
- Offer comfort and encourage your teen to talk about their feelings.
- Work with your teen's school to monitor, prevent and stop bullying behaviours.
- Make safety arrangements. Be sure your teen knows how to get help.
- Build confidence. Teach your teen to be assertive, not aggressive.
- Stand up for your teen. Get involved in bullying awareness and prevention programs.
- Be a role model.

Adult intervention is key to bullying prevention. Being informed about bullying is the first step in addressing bullying behaviour and promoting healthy relationships. Take action with teachers and other adults in your community to implement anti-bullying programs to help end negative implications caused by bullying. For more information and resources on bullying awareness and prevention, check out what www.teachingsexualhealth.ca has to offer.