

## Teen Talk – Bullying



***Bullying can be a problem for lots of young people but especially for those of you who have a disability or have some learning difficulties.***

Bullying can take lots of forms:

- name calling
- fighting, pushing, kicking
- teasing, making fun
- being sent nasty text messages or phone calls.
- being ignored or left out or having your friends taken away from you
- stealing personal items
- swearing
- people making things up about you

Bullies target their victims for many reasons such as weight, appearance, intelligence, disability, sexuality, religion or culture. Some may have had people make comments on the shape of your body or how you walk. You may have had people try to tip your wheelchair or move you in it without asking your permission first.

People with Hydrocephalus can sometimes get really hurtful remarks about the size or shape of their heads. People may make fun of you because you may be so quick to understand jokes or take longer to learn. You may not feel safe and secure with people in your own school year but happier with younger children or with adults. You may not want to go to school or out on the street where these things happen

### What can you do if you are being bullied?

The most important thing is to tell someone straight away. You might be scared that this will make things worse but it won't stop unless you do. If the bullying is happening in school, make sure you tell your parents as well as an adult in school.

Stay calm and look as confident as you can. It's difficult but try to make yourself look brave if something happens even if you really feel frightened. Be firm and clear, look the bully in the eye and tell them to stop.

- Try to use humour when you can.
- Try to ignore hurtful comments. Bullies want to wind you up.
- Get away from the situation as quickly as possible.
- Don't ever blame yourself, because no one deserves to get bullied.
- Don't fight back if you can help it.
- It's not worth getting hurt to keep possessions or money.

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Try to avoid being alone in the places where you know the bully is likely to pick on you. Try to stay in safe areas of the school at break and lunchtime where there are plenty of other people.

If you are hurt at school, tell a teacher or helper straight away and ask for it to be written down. Keep a record of anything that happens or ask your mum or dad to do so.

To have friends, you also need to be a friend and you can do that by trying to be open and friendly with people and by being interested in them

Build up confidence in yourself. Look at your strengths, focus on those and don't think of yourself as a weak person.