Bullying is related to negative psychological, emotional and behavioural outcomes. These outcomes can eventually make youth feel as though they can no longer cope (Wade & Beran, 2011).

Bullying is linked to several precursors to thoughts of suicide (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010):

- depression and hopelessness;
- low self-esteem;
- loneliness and isolation;
- anger and frustration;
- humiliation;
- embarrassment; or
- trauma.

When bullying is accompanied by other risk factors, it often causes suicidal ideation (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010; Olson, 2012; Holt et al., 2015). Risk factors for suicidal ideation include:

- bullying;
- sexual abuse;
- physical abuse;
- drug abuse; or
- depression.

Both bullying victims and those who perpetuate bullying are at a higher risk for suicide. Kids who are involved as both victims and perpetrators of bullying are at the highest risk for suicide (Holt et al, 2015, Suicide Prevention Resource Center, n.d).

Because of the strong connection between bullying and suicide, the development of bullying prevention and intervention programs is vital (van Geel, et al., 2014).

Types of bullying

**VERBAL BULLYING**
- sarcasm;
- threats;
- negative, insulting, or humiliating comments; or
- unwanted sexual comments.

**SOCIAL BULLYING**
- spreading rumours or damaging someone’s reputation;
- excluding others from a group;
- humiliating others with public gestures or graffiti; or
- damaging someone’s friendships.

**PHYSICAL BULLYING**
- intentional physical aggression towards another person;
- destroying or stealing belongings; or
- unwanted sexual touching.

**CYBERBULLYING**
- Using electronic communication (e.g., internet, social media or text messaging) to:
  - intimidate;
  - put-down;
  - spread rumours;
  - make fun of someone; or
  - disseminate private or embarrassing information or images of a person without their permission (Alberta Human Services, 2015).

Cyber bullying victims are 2x more likely to attempt suicide (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010).
Helping out
What to do if a youth is being bullied or in emotional distress or suicidal

ADVICE FOR ADULTS – IF A YOUTH IS BEING BULLIED:
• Offer comfort and support; tell youth they are safe.
• Ask whoever oversees the group in which the bullying happens to monitor the situation.
• Make arrangements for the victim to be safe, either with an adult or older child near where the bullying takes place.
• Help develop confidence, build self-esteem and encourage communication (Alberta Human Services, 2015).

ADVICE FOR ADULTS – IF THE BULLYING VICTIM IS SUICIDAL:
• Ask the bullying victim directly if they are thinking of killing themselves.
• If they say yes, connect them with help immediately. Call your local crisis centre, and connect them with the suicidal youth.
• If the youth tells you they have a plan of how they will kill themselves, call 9-1-1 (Centre for Suicide Prevention, 2015).

ADVICE FOR YOUTH:
• If you see someone being bullied, decide on the safest course of action and act. You might tell the person who is bullying to stop, and/or offer the victim help, and/or seek help from an adult.
• If you are being bullied, stand up for yourself by looking confident, making eye-contact, and using a calm but assertive tone. Tell the bully to stop, then walk away. Seek help from an adult. Do not keep bullying a secret (PREVNet.ca, n.d.).

RESOURCES

FOR PARENTS
• Indigenous Youth Cyberbullying Special Feature, Centre for Suicide Prevention csprev.ca/2bZXxV
• Cyberbullying Special Feature, Centre for Suicide Prevention csprev.ca/2c00h4I
• B-Free.ca
• BullyFreeAlberta.ca
• PREVNet.ca

FOR YOUTH
• KidsHelpPhone.ca 1 (800) 668-6868
• B-Free.ca
• BullyFreeAlberta.ca
• PREVNet.ca

FOR SCHOOLS
• KindCampaign.com
• StopaBully.ca
• PREVNet.ca

1 in 3 youth are bullied (Statistics Canada, 2012).

LGBTQ students experience discrimination 3x more frequently than their heterosexual peers (Canadian Institute of Health Research, 2012).

40% of youth have been cyberbullied (Schneider et al., 2012).

VIEW THE REFERENCE LIST ONLINE www.suicideinfo.ca/resource/bullying-and-suicide/
References


