

ADULT BULLYING

Objective:

To find ways to handle bullying as an adult.

Bullying doesn't end just because you're out of the classroom. Digital, verbal, psychological, and physical harassment occurs among adults at the office, at home, and in public locations.

Even for adults, bullying can still be a humiliating and demoralizing experience. Bear in mind that you are not responsible for the bully's behavior. Your only responsibility is to protect yourself from emotional, social, and physical harm. The best way to do this is not to try to change the bully but rather to change how you respond to the bully.

- Prepare for confrontation. When the bullying is occurring, you may forget what you wanted to say or say things you didn't intend. To prevent this, organize your thoughts ahead of time.
- Set up a meeting in a neutral location and bring a friend, family member or coworker as a witness. If a meeting is not possible, attempt to talk during your next encounter.
- When addressing a bully, look him or her in the eye and adopt an unaggressive posture. Also avoid showing negative emotions.
- Speak calmly and assertively, laying out your concerns. Avoid insults and accusations.
- Let the bully know there will be consequences if the situation doesn't change. This may be legal action or reporting the behavior to management.
- Walk away if no progress is made. Consider ways to avoid the bully if possible or to limit your interactions.

Do not engage in the following:

- Fighting/physical confrontation
- Returning the abuse
- Acting in frustration

Directions:

Use the chart below to write out what you want to say the next time you face your bully. Remember to keep your comments constructive. Do not resort to argumentative or inflammatory statements. The goal is to be assertive and end the bullying, not to hash out the bully's issues or stir up further problems. Also note what you can do to build your confidence for the interaction. It might be something like talking with a friend or listening to a favorite song or meditating.

continued

| Situation | What you want to say | Confidence builder | Outcome anticipated |
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