

em-pa-ty

NOUN: *the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.*

One of the most important social skills involved in bullying prevention is empathy – understanding and responding with caring to what others think and feel. Children are less likely to hurt and more likely to help someone if they can imagine themselves in that person's place and can share that person's thoughts and feelings.

Teaching Empathy Skills

Label Feelings: Ask children to describe and label how they might feel in different bullying situations:

- If they saw someone being bullied
- If they were being bullied themselves
- If they bullied someone

Explain that bullying can lead to strong feelings, such as anger, frustration, and fear. While it is okay to feel these feelings, it is never okay to react by being mean and intentionally hurting someone.

Help your child learn to understand and manage their feelings, this will help them build empathy and it helps promote positive mental health.

Teaching Empathy Skills

Acts of Kindness: Discuss how an act of kindness is the opposite of bullying because it helps another person feel **good** instead of **bad**. Help your children plan one act of kindness and let them know to pay attention to:

- How the act of kindness made them feel?
- How did the person receiving the kindness feel?
- How would their feelings be different if they had done an act of bullying, instead of an act of kindness?

Sit and talk with your child, asking them these questions. What will their next act of kindness be?

Teaching Empathy Skills

Helping Others Feel Better:

How can you know how someone else feels?

Ideas: Listen to what they say, ask them how they feel, look closely at their face and body, watch what they do

How can we recognize when someone is feeling bad or left out?

Ideas: Their face looks sad; they are not laughing when others laugh, crying, not looking at anyone, or playing alone.

How can you cheer up others who feel bad and help them feel better?

Ideas: Pay attention to them, pat them on the back, ask them if they would like to play with you, sit with them

Tips for building empathy & to prevent bullying:

<http://www.prevnet.ca/>

<http://preventingbullying.promoteprevent.org/>

For more information about available programs and services in your area, please contact:

Addiction Services Help Line
1-866-332-2322

Mental Health Help Line
1-877-303-2642

