

# My Mentee is Being Bullied

When mentee's are involved in bullying, it is important for mentors to be willing to take action.

Mentee's may not tell their mentors that they are being bullied because they are embarrassed or frightened. If you suspect your mentee is being bullied or your mentee brings it up, consider these steps:


- **Talk with your mentee.** Focus on your mentee. Express your concern and make it clear that you want to help.
- **Empathize with your mentee.** Say bullying is wrong, that it is not their fault, and that you are glad they had the courage to tell you about it.
- **Work together to find solutions.** Ask your mentee what they think can be done to help. Reassure them that the situation can be handled privately.
- **Document ongoing bullying.** Work with your mentee to keep a record of all bullying incidents. If it involves cyberbullying, keep a record of all messages or postings.
- **Help your mentee develop strategies and skills for handling bullying.** Provide suggestions for ways to respond to bullying, and help your mentee gain confidence by rehearsing their responses.
- **Be persistent.** Bullying may not be resolved overnight.
- **Stay vigilant to other possible problems that your mentee may be having.** Some of the warning signs may be signs of other serious problems. Share your concerns with a counselor at your mentee's school.

## Working with Your mentee's School

Mentors are often reluctant to report bullying to school officials for a variety of reasons, but bullying may not stop without the school's help. Mentors should never be afraid to call the school to report that their mentee is being bullied and ask for help to stop the bullying.

- **Know the school policies.** Ask for a copy or check the student handbook to see whether your school has standards in place that will help resolve the situation.
- **Open the line of communication.** Call or set up an appointment to talk with your mentee's teacher or school counselor and establish a partnership to stop the bullying.
- **Get help for your mentee.** Seek advice from your mentee's guidance counselor or other school-based health professionals. They may be able to help your mentee cope with the stress of being bullied.
- **Commit to making the bullying stop.** Talk regularly with your mentee and with school staff to see whether the bullying has stopped. You may need to seek an attorney's help or contact local law enforcement officials if the bullying persists or escalates.

## What Not to Do

- **Never tell your mentee to ignore the bullying.** What the mentee may “hear” is that you are going to ignore it. Be supportive and gather information about the bullying. Often, trying to ignore bullying allows it to become more serious.
- **Do not blame your mentee for being bullied.** Do not assume that your mentee did something to provoke the bullying.
- **Do not encourage your mentee to harm the person who is bullying them.** It could get your mentee hurt, suspended, or expelled.
- **Do not contact the parents of the students who bullied your mentee.** It may make matters worse. School officials should contact the parents of the child who bullied your mentee.
- **Do not demand or expect a solution on the spot.** Indicate you would like to follow up to determine the best course of action. Also, be aware that the law limits the ability of school personnel  from revealing disciplinary actions taken against other students. Just because they cannot tell you if or how another student was disciplined, does not mean action was not taken.