



# BULLYING

## A GUIDE FOR COACHES



### WHAT IS BULLYING AMONG TEENS?

Bullying is the repetitive and intentional hurting of one person or group using intimidation or aggression to create a physical or emotional sense of power over a victim. About 20% of teens experience some level of bullying. Bullying puts children at risk of mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety and PTSD.

### SUPPORTIVE COACHING TECHNIQUES

It's important to remember that there is a difference between helpful coaching techniques and bullying your athletes.

### SIGNS TO LOOK FOR IF YOU FEAR YOUR ATHLETES ARE BEING BULLIED

- They no longer have interest in playing the sport
- They complain of unexplained aches or pains
- They have little interest in being social with their teammates
- There are unusual changes in their behavior

### IF YOU'RE QUESTIONING WHETHER YOUR COACHING TECHNIQUES ARE HELPFUL OR HARMFUL, ASK YOURSELF

- Are you creating more of a power imbalance?
- Are you utilizing unwanted, aggressive behavior?
- Are you setting unrealistic goals for your players?
- Are you coming across as threatening?

### WHAT DOES BULLYING LOOK LIKE?

Verbal bullying including name calling and insulting others

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Emotional bullying such as mocking & humiliating others

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Physical bullying including shoving, hitting, kicking etc.

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Sexual Harassment involves harassing others through sexual comments, or spreading rumors about someone's sexual activity.

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Exclusion - purposefully ignoring someone or making them feel isolated

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Relational Aggression includes talking negatively about a friend without them knowing

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Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technology or social media

## Bullying prevention as a coach

### HERE ARE SOME WAYS YOU CAN CREATE A COMFORTABLE ENVIRONMENT AND PREVENT BULLYING ON THE FIELD

- Emphasize the importance of anti-bullying – encourage the importance of being an “upstander” when witnessing bullying by not providing an audience and intervening if they feel safe to do so
- Encourage players to report bullying incidents to trusted adults
- Have open conversations with your players about respectful behaviors
- Clearly state the consequences of bullying
- Encourage respectful and assertive behavior and outline how it is different from bullying behavior

### HOW TO ENSURE YOUR ATHLETES FEEL SAFE AND COMFORTABLE ON THE FIELD

- Give feedback in private, especially corrective. Some athletes may appreciate positive praise in front of teammates, however, other athletes respond better to positive praise in private as well.
- Be stern and direct, but constructive. Be clear about the expectations and strategies to achieve those expectations.
- Allow open communication between you and your athletes.
- Validate their feelings and use active listening.

### REMEMBER:

Having a positive relationship with your athletes plays a huge role in their mental health and their interactions with others. This includes the way they treat one another. You are one of the most influential people in your athlete’s lives, so it’s important to prevent bullying and educate your players on unacceptable behavior.

**If you have concerns regarding your teen’s safety, call 911 or 988**

**Spanish language hotline:  
1-888-628-9454**

### RESOURCES

[NASP ONLINE](#)

[APA.ORG](#)

[STOMP OUT BULLYING](#)

[CLEMSON](#)

This information should not be used for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease; anyone seeking personal medical advice should consult with a licensed professional



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Content developed and reviewed by Lisa Corbin, PhD, LPC, NCC and Jessica Glass Kendorski, PhD, NCSP, BCBA-D, faculty at the School of Professional and Applied Psychology at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (PCOM).

