

**We have seen examples of bullying behaviour in the video — but what's the problem?
What's wrong with bullying behaviour?**

- 1** Write down your own ideas about it. You can say what you like — you do not have to share these ideas with anybody else.

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- 2** Here is a typical statement from a target of bullying behaviour:

I used to cry myself to sleep every night. I was miserable. My parents knew and they talked to the headmaster but he wasn't interested and said he couldn't do anything about it. My parents knew all the bullies' parents. One girl even lived in the same street and we had been friends since we were two. Like a sheep she dumped me because no-one else talked to me.

When I was at primary school I got picked on non-stop for two years. No-one talked to me. I hadn't done anything to get blamed for, and I still don't know the reason I got picked on. I wasn't any wealthier or poorer or a different race.

(Girl, 14 <http://www.scre.ac.uk/bully/bullying.html>)

This all happened in primary 6 and I have lost nearly all my self-confidence and hate being on my own. I'd hate to think this was happening to anyone else. I have a fear that if one girl doesn't talk to me they will all start again and it will never stop. I don't want it to go on for the rest of my school life. I couldn't cope.

What problems has bullying behaviour caused for this person?

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- 3 In looking at the impacts of bullying behaviour many people only consider the target. Who else might suffer because of bullying behaviour? Explain your ideas.

Look at these descriptions of the effects of bullying behaviour and answer the questions that follow.

Being bullied can damage lives. The long-term effects of on-going bullying behaviour can damage a person's health and well-being that lasts into adult life. It damages self-esteem, increases anxiety and can cause serious depression. Bullies are more likely to continue with the aggressive behaviour and engage in delinquency and violence.

Bullying behaviour can make children feel afraid, petrified, lonely, angry, distressed or physically ill. Children who are always 'on guard' are always checking where the bully is and wondering when it will happen again. When children are 'on alert' like this, they are less likely to concentrate or to learn. Their friendships may suffer as they are often worried and not ready to have fun.

Children may begin to feel they deserve the treatment and become withdrawn, isolated, and feel less able to fit into their world.

(<http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetails.aspx?p=114&np=141&id=1734>)

Evidence has steadily accumulated about the negative consequences of student involvement in bully/victim problems. On the basis of longitudinal studies, it has been concluded that repeated exposure to being bullied can, and indeed often does, undermine the health and wellbeing of vulnerable students (Egan & Perry 1998; Rigby 1999). It is also known that the perpetrators of bullying not only tend to experience depression and engage in suicidal thinking but also, if not corrected at school, are more likely to act violently as adults in the home and workplace (Farrington 1993). Children who are both bullies and victims are seen as especially prone to mental illness.

(Ken Rigby, 'Addressing bullying in schools : theory and practice', *Trends and issues in Crime and Criminal Justice* No 259, June 2003 page 1, <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/tandi2/tandi259t.html>)

- 4 Create a table that summarises the impacts or effects of bullying behaviour on the aggressor and the target. There is also a third column — the impact of bullying behaviour on the nature of the society in which these people operate. Add your ideas to that column as well.

<i>Impacts of bullying behaviour on the target</i>	<i>Impacts of bullying behaviour on the aggressor</i>	<i>Impacts of bullying behaviour on the society</i>

Look at this statement.

There continues to be a good deal of resistance to the view that bullying is harmful to the health of children. Some of the resistance comes from people who proudly assert that being bullied at school never did them any harm. This is not surprising. In a given year, about half the school children who are surveyed in Australia (currently over 38,000) report that they were not bullied at all. Then there are also those who claim that being bullied did them good. They responded (they say) to the challenge, and became tougher for the experience. And it is true that among those who say they are bullied weekly (some 15% of Australian children) there are some who say they are not really bothered by it. These are often tough, resilient children — fortunate to be so. It is the ten percent of children who are continually being bullied and plainly ARE bothered, feeling angry and/or sad as a consequence, who concern us most. For those who do not appreciate the misery and health concerns of these children we need clear convincing evidence that bullying really does them serious harm . . .

Little progress will be made in countering bullying in schools until there is general acceptance that the experience of being repeatedly bullied over time can have serious health implications for a substantial proportion of children.

(Ken Rigby, <http://www.education.unisa.edu.au/bullying/harm.html>)

5 What attitudes is Rigby suggesting will limit bullying behaviour programs in schools?

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6 How would you answer an argument that bullying behaviour is not harmful?

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