

Name _____

Being a Bullying Bystander: How to Support a Friend



Bullying is an unfortunate reality that many students face during their school years. If you have a friend who is being bullied, you might wonder how you can help and support them. Supporting a friend who is being bullied is crucial in helping them navigate through a difficult and often painful situation. Here are some steps you can take to be there for your friend:

- **Listen and Validate:** One of the most important ways to support your friend is by being a good listener. Encourage them to talk about their experiences and feelings. Let them know that you believe them and that their feelings are valid. Avoid judgment or blaming your friend for the bullying.
- **Offer Empathy and Comfort:** Show empathy by understanding and sharing in your friend's emotions. Offer comfort and reassurance. Let your friend know that you care about their well-being and that you are there to support them through this challenging time.
- **Encourage Reporting:** Encourage your friend to report the bullying to a trusted adult, such as a teacher, school counselor, or parent. Assure them that reporting is a brave and responsible action that can help stop the bullying.
- **Document the Bullying:** Help your friend keep a record of bullying incidents, including dates, times, locations, and the individuals involved. This documentation can be useful when reporting the bullying to school authorities.
- **Be a Witness and Stand Up:** If you witness bullying happening to your friend, stand up against it when it's safe to do so. Use assertive, non-confrontational language to discourage the bullies and support your friend.
- **Encourage Self-Confidence:** Help boost your friend's self-esteem and self-confidence. Remind them of their strengths and talents. Encourage them to engage in activities they enjoy and to pursue their interests.
- **Spend Time Together:** Spend quality time with your friend outside of school to provide a safe and supportive environment. Engaging in activities you both enjoy can help alleviate the stress of the bullying.
- **Seek Adult Intervention:** If the bullying continues or escalates, it's essential to involve trusted adults who can address the situation effectively. Advocate for your friend by reporting the bullying to school staff or parents.
- **Promote Online Safety:** In cases of cyberbullying, educate your friend about online safety and responsible internet use. Encourage them to block and report cyberbullies and to avoid engaging in online conflicts.
- **Be Patient:** Healing from the effects of bullying takes time. Be patient and continue to support your friend even after the bullying stops. Offer a listening ear and ongoing encouragement.

It's important to remember that you are not responsible for solving the bullying issue on your own, but your support can make a significant difference in your friend's life.

