



Respecting Cultural Diversity

Ethnic bullying is intending to harm someone because of their race or culture. Bullies who hide behind racially motivated beliefs and attitudes are still bullies. In fact, law enforcement may consider racially motivated bullying to be a hate crime and they may prosecute.

Fourteen per cent of elementary school children report they have been bullied because of their race or ethnicity.¹

Additionally, high school students who were not born in Canada experienced significantly more bullying, racism and bigotry related to their ethnic background than those born in Canada.² A survey conducted for Alberta Education revealed that some children and youth in Alberta have experienced exclusion from play or social activities because of their ethnicity.³

It is important to be sensitive to the experiences of those who may be targets of racially motivated bullying, and to look for any signs of racial intolerance that may be exhibited or experienced by children or youth.

Who experiences ethnic bullying?

This type of bullying can affect anyone, including those who:

- Self-identify as part of an immigrant or ethnic community
- Are perceived to be part of an immigrant or ethnic community
- Are teachers, parents, coaches and community members that are not a part of the ethnic majority but are sensitive to this issue.

Bullying directed at someone because of their ethnicity may include:

- Malicious name-calling
- Obscene gestures
- Racially motivated teasing, taunting, froshing, or threats
- Spreading rumours or gossip about a person's cultural identity
- Physical aggression such as hitting, pushing, kicking, punching, choking, and stalking
- Isolating someone from his or her friends or peer group
- Using the Internet, instant messaging, and social networking sites to intimidate, put down, spread rumours, make fun of, threaten, or exclude someone because of their actual or perceived cultural identity.

1. Pepler D, Connolly J, Craig W. *Bullying and Harassment: Experiences of Minority and Immigrant Youth*. CERIS Report. www.metropolis.net

2. McKenny K, Pepler D, Craig W, Connolly J. *Peer victimization and psychosocial adjustment: The experiences of Canadian immigrant youth*. *Electronic Journal of Research in Educational Psychology*. No. 9 Vol 4(2). 2006. pp: 239-264.

3. *Focus Alberta Survey*, September 2007, Alberta Education

**Need to talk to someone about bullying?
Call 1-888-456-2323 (24 hours, toll-free in Alberta).**

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Activities should be included in every bullying prevention program to raise awareness and understanding of culture and beliefs.

If you find yourself the target of racial bullying, you may feel:

- Alone
- Embarrassed or ashamed
- Depressed and uncertain about yourself or your future
- Angry and want to turn the tables and become a bully yourself
- Unsafe at school or in your community
- Stressed and often think about skipping school or activities to avoid the bullies
- Set apart from your cultural community, and as though you no longer want to acknowledge your heritage
- Isolated and wanting to withdraw from social activities and hide away.

These are all normal and natural feelings, but remember you can always reach out for help.

If you, or someone you know is, the target of racial bullying:

- 1. Tell someone you trust** – Talk to a trusted adult or friend. This may be an elder, faith leader, teacher, parent, relative, youth worker, counsellor, or coach. No one deserves to be bullied, and you don't have to suffer in silence. Keep speaking up until someone helps you.
- 2. Recognize the role that culture plays** – Cultural norms often influence how people define and respond to bullying. The way that one group deals with bullying issues may conflict with another group's tradition or values. Be as inclusive of all other cultures involved.

3. Stay safe – Don't fight back. Bullies want attention and fighting back gives them what they want. If you fight back, you may get hurt or make the situation worse. If you are a bystander, go for help and then provide moral and emotional support to the person being bullied.

4. Write down everything - Keep a record about the incident, including the date, time, location, and what was said or done. If you are being bullied online, don't delete the message. You don't have to read it, but keep it. It's evidence. The police, your Internet service provider or your school authorities can use this information to help protect you from further abuse.

5. Get help – Caring and trusted adults and friends are available to help and support you. Look for resources in your community that can offer culturally appropriate approaches to healing. While it is not usually recommended to try to resolve issues with the bully and the target together, some cultures may feel that this is an appropriate way to deal with the bullying behaviours.

6. Find support in your community – Check to see if there is a local group in your community where you can meet others who have had similar experiences. Consider starting support groups or other types of resources in your community if they do not exist. It is important to ensure that any support is culturally appropriate and includes faith leaders and well-respected community members.

For more information on bullying, visit www.bullyfreealberta.ca.

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