

My child is being bullied but won't talk to me. What should I do?

It can be difficult as a parent or carer when you suspect that your child is being bullied but they refuse to talk about it. While it's important to respect your child's privacy and boundaries, it's also crucial to ensure that they receive the necessary support and protection. Here are some actionable tips that can help you navigate this difficult situation.

1 - Look for signs of bullying.

Even if your child won't talk to you, there are warning signs that can indicate that they are being bullied. These include physical injuries, changes in behaviour, difficulty sleeping or eating, avoidance of certain situations or places, and decreased self-esteem. It's important to take these signs seriously and to investigate further. You can read up on more signs to look for [here](#).

2 - Create a safe and supportive environment.

Your child needs to feel safe and supported to feel comfortable sharing their experiences with you. Make sure that you create an open and non-judgmental space where your child can talk to you without fear of reprisal or criticism.

3 - Educate yourself about bullying.

The more you know about bullying, the better equipped you will be to handle the situation. Take the time to read up on the subject, read more articles in our [Parent Hub](#) or take your family through our [Family Tech Plan](#). Doing these activities will help you to understand the different types of bullying, its causes, and its effects.

4 - Start the conversation.

If your child is reluctant to talk, don't force them. Instead, look for opportunities to [start the conversation](#) in a gentle and non-threatening way. You could mention a news story about bullying or ask them about their day at school.

5 - Empathise and validate their feelings.

It's important to let your child know that you understand how they're feeling and that their emotions are valid. Avoid dismissing their experiences, and instead offer them your support and reassurance.

6 - Take action.

If you suspect that your child is being bullied, it's important to act. [Talk to their teacher or principal](#), and work together to develop a plan to keep your child safe. You may also want to seek the advice of a counsellor or therapist who can help your child cope with the emotional impact of bullying.

7. Monitor your child's online activity.

In today's digital age, bullying can take place online as well as in person. [Keep an eye on your child's online activity](#), and look for signs that they may be experiencing cyber bullying. These include changes in mood or behaviour, withdrawal from social media, and a reluctance to use their phone or computer.

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8 - Encourage your child to seek help.

It's important that your child knows that they can seek help and support when they need it. Encourage them to talk to a teacher, counsellor, or trusted adult if they are feeling overwhelmed or threatened.

9 - Model positive behaviour.

As a parent or carer, your behaviour and language can have a powerful impact on your child's self-esteem and confidence. Make sure that you model positive and respectful behaviour in your interactions with others and avoid using derogatory language or making negative comments.

10 - Keep the conversation going.

Talking about bullying should be an ongoing conversation, not just a one-time discussion. Check in with your child regularly and ask them how they're feeling. Encourage them to share their experiences and continue to offer them your support and guidance.

Helping a child who won't talk about bullying can be challenging. However, by creating a safe and supportive environment, educating yourself about bullying, and taking action, you can help your child feel supported and protected. Remember to model positive behaviour and keep the conversation going. With your help and support, your child can overcome the effects of bullying and emerge stronger and more resilient.

If you are concerned about a child or young person being bullied, please seek help. Speak to a trusted GP, school wellbeing staff, or a helpline such as:

[Dolly's Dream Support Line](#) 0488 881 033

Parentline in your state or territory

Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800

headspace 1800 650 890

Lifeline 13 11 14

Beyond Blue 1300 224 636