

## Young Adults and Bullying

Can adults be “bullied?” Most young adults are uncomfortable with the term bullying—they associate it with school-aged children. However, behaviors that are traditionally considered bullying among school-aged youth often require new attention and strategies in young adults and college students.

Many of these behaviors are considered crimes under state and federal law and may trigger serious consequences after the age of 18.

Although media reports often call unwanted, aggressive behavior among young adults “bullying,” this is not exactly accurate. Many state and federal laws address bullying-like behaviors in this age group under very serious terms, such as hazing, harassment, stalking and cyber-bullying.

Young adults can get help and should be encouraged to talk to someone they trust about what is happening.

### Steps to Take:

If you or a young adult you know is a victim of bullying behavior, assess the situation and take steps to deal with it.

- › Determine if the behavior violates the high school, college or university campus policies or local or state laws.
- › Review student codes of conduct, state criminal laws and civil rights laws.
- › Report criminal acts to law enforcement.
- › If on a college campus, consult the college’s Title IX coordinator to help determine if the behavior is sexual harassment.

Many college or university campuses also have an ombudsperson or similar individual who handles a variety of concerns and complaints. He or she can help direct the young adult to appropriate campus resources. Your employee assistance program can also provide information and resources for dealing with bullying.

### Resources

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services: [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)

U.S. Department of Education: [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

U.S. Department of Justice: [www.justice.gov](http://www.justice.gov)

### Additional Information

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