What is Bullying?
Bullying is the aggressive use of power to intentionally distress another individual. It is a form of peer abuse.

Types of bullying

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct:</th>
<th>Indirect/Relational:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hitting/kicking</td>
<td>Gossiping</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name calling</td>
<td>Spreading rumours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats</td>
<td>Excluding/shunning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email/text messages</td>
<td>Emails/text messages</td>
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</tbody>
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Prevalence in Canada:
Children who bully others: 5–15%
Children who are bullied by others: 10–20%

What can Primary Care Practitioners do?
Characterize the bullying involvement using the questions on reverse. Support the child. Treat symptoms/injuries requiring immediate attention.

Multidisciplinary Involvement

- Parents, School
  - Often adults are not aware of bullying involvement
- Social Worker/Psychologist
  - Children who bully need strategies to reduce aggressive behaviour, promote empathy
  - Children who are bullied need assertive strategies, friendship skills
- Therapists/Psychiatrists
  - where necessary for depression/anxiety symptoms, suicidality

Resources for Primary Care Practitioners and Families
Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network
www.prevnet.ca

Stand Up 2 Bullying, Canadian Red Cross
www.redcross.ca/article.asp?id=24700&tid=108

Stop Bullying Now (US)
www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov

Friendly Schools & Families (Australia)

Canadian Public Health Association
acsp.cpha.ca/antibullying/English/bigdeal/bigdeal.html

Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (US)
mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/15plus/health
Checklist of Indicators

Children who bully others may exhibit:

- Physical symptoms (headaches, stomachaches)
- Suicidal thoughts/suicide (in extreme cases)
- Poor school function (low grades, dropping out)
- Behavioural signs (little regard for others' feelings, aggressive with parents/siblings, possessing unexplained items/money)

Children who are bullied by others may exhibit:

- Physical symptoms (headaches, stomachaches)
- Psychosomatic symptoms (difficulty sleeping, bedwetting)
- Depression/anxiety/psychosis symptoms
- Suicidal thoughts/suicide (in extreme cases)
- Poor school function (avoidance/refusal)
- Behavioural signs (loses items/money, injuries, damaged clothes/items)

Questions to ask if you suspect bullying involvement

1. How often do you bully others/are you bullied?  
   *the more frequent, the higher the risk of problems*

2. How long have you bullied others/been bullied?  
   *prolonged involvement is more likely to have established behaviour patterns*

3. Where do you bully others/are you bullied? (eg, school, home, sports, community)  
   *across more relationships, greater risk of problems*

4. What types of bullying are used? (eg, hitting, insults, gossiping, text messaging)  
   *though no direct comparisons between types, severity can be measured by distress caused to victimized child*

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