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
- **Direct:**
  - Hitting/kicking
  - Name calling
  - Threats
  - Email/text messages
- **Indirect/Relational:**
  - Gossiping
  - Spreading rumours
  - Excluding/shunning
  - Emails/text messages

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
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*

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)

Developed by Dr. Jessica Fulton & Dr. Jennifer German  
Designed by Gill German