



Respecting Aboriginal Peoples

Bullying for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Canadians is a diverse and complex issue. Sometimes bullying is perpetrated by those outside the Aboriginal community on members of the community, such as Aboriginal children and youth being victimized by non-Aboriginal children and youth for looking Aboriginal.

Sometimes bullying can be perpetrated by someone inside the community on a member of their own group. Some examples of this type of bullying are:

- Family (band) differences, mutual resentments and grudges
- Bullying people for not looking Aboriginal, or for having a lighter or darker skin tone
- New people coming into the community
- Name calling.

Bullies who hide behind racially motivated beliefs and attitudes are still bullies.

Law enforcement could consider racially motivated bullying to be a hate crime that may be prosecuted.

Who experiences racial bullying?

This type of bullying can affect anyone and may be targeted at people who:

- Self-identify as First Nations, Métis or Inuit
- Are perceived to be Aboriginal
- Are teachers, parents, coaches and community members that are Aboriginal.

Bullying directed at someone because of their race may include:

- Malicious name-calling
- Obscene gestures
- Racially motivated teasing, taunting, frothing, 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.

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

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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 who respects your confidentiality. This may be a teacher, parent, relative, youth worker, counsellor, coach, elder or faith leader. Remember, you don't have to suffer in silence. Keep speaking up until someone helps you. No one deserves to be bullied!
- 2. 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 provide moral and emotional support to the person being bullied.

- 3. 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 your evidence. The police, your Internet service provider, or your school authorities can use this information to help protect you from further abuse.
- 4. Get help** - Caring and trusted adults and friends are available to help and support you. Look for resources in your community that can offer traditional approaches to healing. Another option is to have members of your community work with the bully (or the target) and make a community healing circle.
- 5. 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 Elders and well-respected community members.

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

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