

# Making Friends and Bullying

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# How do friends influence us?

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**Friendfluence affects you in more ways than you realize.** Flora made up the word "friendfluence" to capture the effect that friends have on our lives: "Friendfluence is the powerful and often unappreciated role that friends—past and present—play in determining our sense of self and the direction of our lives" (p. 6). Whether you realize it or not, your friends have shaped who you are today. You are even the product of the friends who are no longer your friends

Friends can give you vital life skills

Childhood friendships start your learning process

Teen friendships shape your later romantic bonds

Friends can help you define your priorities

Having friends can help you get more friends

Your online friends can steer your thoughts and behaviors

Friends can make you miserable too

Friends matter to you, regardless of gender

Couple friendships can help your own relationship

Friends can give you a reality check

Banding together with friends can help you effect social change

Being a friend helps your friends

Close friends support you through thick and thin

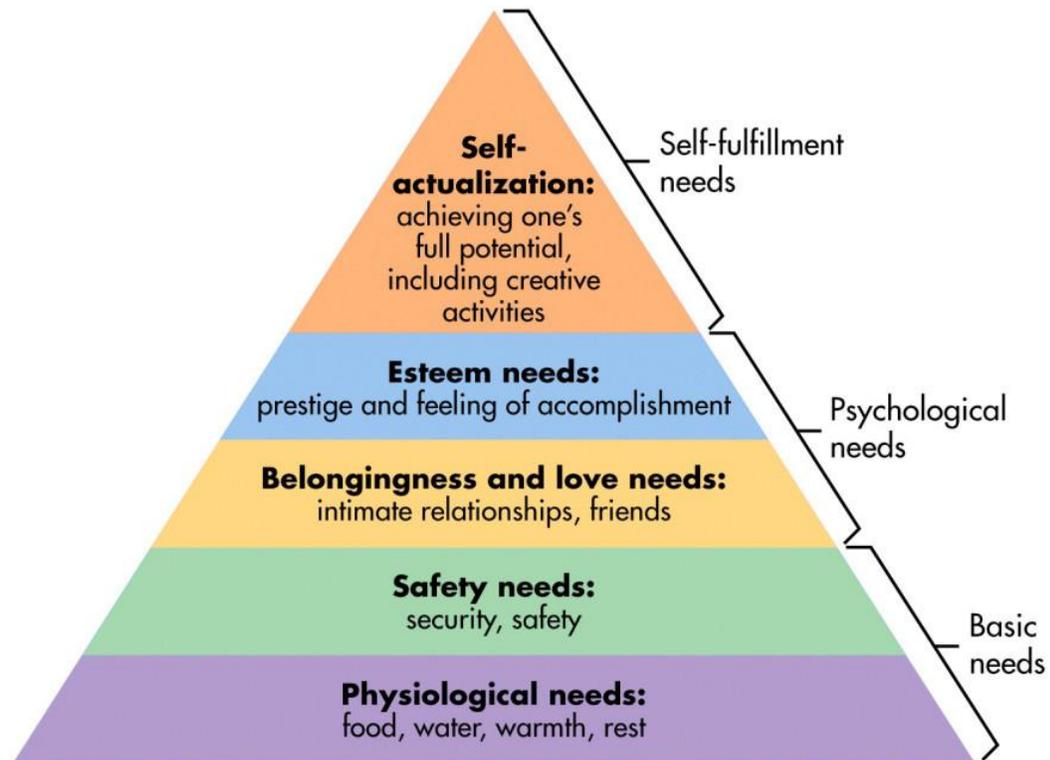
**You're less lonely when you have friends**

(<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/fulfillment-any-age/201303/fifteen-reasons-we-need-friends>)



# Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

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Love and belongingness needs - after physiological and safety needs have been fulfilled, the third level of human needs is social and involves feelings of belongingness. The need for interpersonal relationships motivates behavior

Examples include friendship, intimacy, trust, and acceptance, receiving and giving affection and love. Affiliating, being part of a group (family, friends, work)

(<https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html>).



# At a Glance:

## 4 Skills for Making Friends

The benefits of social success can be huge. It can build self-esteem and lead to success in other areas. Having weak social skills doesn't mean your child won't be able to make friends. But she may need your help and support.



### Initiate Conversation

Social interaction revolves around talking to other people. Can your child think of appropriate topics to chat about based on the person she's with and where they are?



### Interpret Social Situations

Being able to size up a situation and the people in it is key to knowing how to act. Does your child know when to start or stop talking based on what's happening around her?



### Interact Positively

There's a positive way to engage with people and a negative way. Is your child able to join a conversation without interrupting or calling negative attention to herself?



### Listen to Others

One of the basic social rules is to listen when someone else is speaking. Can your child maintain her focus and follow what someone's saying from start to finish?

**Understood**

for learning & attention issues

For more tips and resources, go to [understood.org](https://www.understood.org)

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# Steps to making friends

- Initiate conversation
- Interpret social situations
- Interact positively
- Listen to others (<https://www.understood.org/en/friends-feelings/common-challenges/making-keeping-friends/at-a-glance-4-skills-for-making-friends>)



# Signs that your friendship is not healthy

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- ❑ Sign #1 You find yourself in a competition with her/his other “best friends.”
- ❑ Sign #2 There’s an imbalance in talk time—all for the friend, none for you.
- ❑ Sign #3 Your best friend blurts out criticism with a self-righteous attitude.
- ❑ Sign #4 Who calls whom?
- ❑ Sign #5 Your best friend tells you that you need to change.
- ❑ Sign #6 You’re walking on eggshells.
- ❑ Sign #7 You’re riding an emotional roller coaster with your friend at the controls.
- ❑ Sign #8 The stress starts to settle in your body (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/resolution-not-conflict/201603/8-signs-toxic-friendship>).



# How to help a friend if the problem is bigger than you

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## THE PROBLEM

- There has been a crime or someone is at immediate risk of harm.
- Someone is feeling hopeless, helpless, thinking of suicide.
- Someone is acting differently than normal, such as always seeming sad or anxious, struggling to complete tasks, or not being able care for themselves.
- A child is being bullied in school.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Call 911.
- Contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline online or at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). The toll-free call goes to the nearest crisis center in our national network. These centers provide 24-hour crisis counseling and mental health referrals.
- Find a local counselor or mental health professional.
- Contact the: 1) Teacher, 2) School counselor, 3) School principal, 4) School superintendent, and 5) State Department of Education (<https://www.stopbullying.gov/get-help-now/index.html>)



# What is bullying?

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- ❑ The current definition acknowledges two modes and four types by which youth can be bullied or can bully others. The two modes of bullying include **direct** (e.g., bullying that occurs in the presence of a targeted youth) and **indirect** (e.g., bullying not directly communicated to a targeted youth such as spreading rumors). In addition to these two modes, the four types of bullying include broad categories of **physical, verbal, relational** (e.g., efforts to harm the reputation or relationships of the targeted youth), and **damage to property**.
- ❑ Bullying can happen in any number of places, contexts, or locations. Sometimes that place is online or through a cellphone. Bullying that occurs using technology (including but not limited to phones, email, chat rooms, instant messaging, and online posts) is considered electronic bullying and is viewed as a context or location.
- ❑ Electronic bullying or cyberbullying involves primarily verbal aggression (e.g., threatening or harassing electronic communications) and relational aggression (e.g., spreading rumors electronically). Electronic bullying or cyberbullying can also involve property damage resulting from electronic attacks that lead to the modification, dissemination, damage, or destruction of a youth's privately stored electronic information.
- ❑ Some bullying actions can fall into criminal categories, such as harassment, hazing, or assault (<https://www.stopbullying.gov/media/facts/index.html#definition>).



# Statistics of Bullying

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## Been Bullied

- 28% of U.S. students in grades 6–12 experienced bullying.
- 20% of U.S. students in grades 9–12 experienced bullying.

## Bullied Others

- Approximately 30% of young people admit to bullying others in surveys.

## Seen Bullying

- 70.6% of young people say they have seen bullying in their schools.
- 70.4% of school staff have seen bullying. 62% witnessed bullying two or more times in the last month and 41% witness bullying once a week or more.
- When bystanders intervene, bullying stops within 10 seconds 57% of the time.

## Been Cyberbullied

- 9% of students in grades 6–12 experienced cyberbullying.
- 15% of high school students (grades 9–12) were electronically bullied in the past year.
- However, 55.2% of LGBTQ students experienced cyberbullying.

## How Often Adult Notified

- Only about 20 to 30% of students who are bullied notify adults about the bullying (<https://www.stopbullying.gov/media/facts/index.html#definition>).



# Bullying and Suicide

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The relationship between bullying and suicide is complex. Many media reports oversimplify this relationship, insinuating or directly stating that bullying can cause suicide. The facts tell a different story. In particular, it is not accurate and potentially dangerous to present bullying as the “cause” or “reason” for a suicide, or to suggest that suicide is a natural response to bullying. We recommend media not use the word “bully-cide.”

Research indicates that persistent bullying can lead to or worsen feelings of isolation, rejection, exclusion, and despair, as well as depression and anxiety, which can contribute to suicidal behavior.

The vast majority of young people who are bullied do not become suicidal.

Most young people who die by suicide have multiple risk factors.

Some youth, such as LGBTQ youth, are at increased risk for suicide attempts even when bullying is not a factor (<https://www.stopbullying.gov/media/facts/index.html#definition>).



# References

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- ❑ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/fulfillment-any-age/201303/fifteen-reasons-we-need-friends>
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