

**Bradenton Herald**

Tuesday, August 12, 2014

Living & Entertainment>Living>Health

By Princess Drake

## **Mental Health Minute: Help for children who are being bullied**

We read almost weekly about tragedy that comes when a young person who was bullied--either in person or on-line. Being bullied can be very hard, it can make you sad or make you think, "What's wrong with me?" If you have ever felt that way, know that you are not alone. There are many children around the world facing the same issue.

Bullies do not have a specific "look" but often they have specific behaviors. A bully often wants attention, may have problems at home or may not understand how to treat others. Bullies can make you sad, lonely, embarrass you or sometimes physically hurt you. Being brave can be difficult when you're scared, but with help, things can get better. The first thing to remember is that it is not your fault. Bullies may not understand that what they are doing is hurting you, so here are some ways to be brave:

- Tell someone you trust -- a teacher, parents, friend, principal, counselor, bus driver or any adult that you trust. Adults are not always the best in being able to tell when something is wrong, so speaking up can alert them. Keep telling someone until something is done so you can get the support you need and the bully can also get the help they need.
- When in doubt, walk away -- Don't be the hero. Being mean and hurtful to the bully does not make things better, but can sometimes make them worse. One of the best ways to avoid any conflict is to walk away from it. Sometimes ignoring the person can make him or her stop. Having a friend with you can give you that extra support to call for help if you are unable to avoid confrontation.
- Don't become a Bully -- One of the dangers in wanting to take action is becoming a bully yourself. It takes more courage to be nice than it does to be mean. Remember how you felt when that person was hurting you, so that you don't repeat those behaviors.
- Remember to feel good about yourself -- Being bullied can be hurtful and cause us to feel like we are not good enough, smart enough, brave enough or not attractive. Everyone is unique and beautiful in their own way. Being brave and telling someone are just a couple great ways to feel better about yourself. Stay active in what you like to do or maybe try something new.

The top priority is having the tools to get help, stay positive and remain safe. As adults, we want to make sure that we help you as much as possible, but it begins with you. The good thing about speaking up is that it gives the bully the opportunity to change. In addition, you have the possibility in playing a big role in preventing someone else from being bullied.

Princess Drake, is a doctoral candidate and psychology intern at Manatee Glens. For more information about Manatee Glens mental health and addictions services, call 941-782-4150 or visit [ManateeGlens.org](http://ManateeGlens.org).