

Yarning with older ones (13–20yrs)

Don't stop talking to your kids as they get older. Big ones may be less likely to chat, but it is important to keep talking and listening.

Many big ones are glad their parents and carers make the effort to spend time with them. Communication is more than just asking about what your kid has been doing; it's also asking about what they've been thinking and feeling.



Things to think about

- Older ones can get very upset and emotional because they are growing and changing and practising to be an adult; they want to be heard, understood and accepted.
- Let your older one know you will listen and try to understand their point of view, without putting them down or trying to control them.
- Even when there are arguments, listening to your older ones is good because it gives them a chance to tell you what is bothering them.
- If an agreement cannot be reached, older ones are still more likely to do what their parents and carers want if their parents and carers listen to them.
- Regular **yarning** with your older ones helps them to know they can come to you about; both good and bad things that may happen.
- Some older ones have a hard time with anger and upset feelings and keep their feelings inside. You can help your older ones to learn that anger is a normal emotion and that it needs to be dealt with safely.

Yarning with your older ones

- It can be hard when parents and carers try to talk about an issue with their older one and he or she won't talk about it. If you can, find times and ways to talk about it before it gets worse.
- Try going for a drive or a walk with them so you can talk 'shoulder to shoulder'.
- You could try **yarning** about things like bullying when you see bullying in a movie or on TV. You could try to yarn about better ways of solving issues than using violence or bullying.
- If your older one doesn't want to talk, sometimes it is helpful to back off for a while and give them a chance to think it over. A few days later, you can try to start the yarn again. Be patient with them and they will open up more easily.

- Although it may be harder to get boys to open up, parents and carers should try to yarn with their sons just as much as their daughters.

What's worrying older ones?

Family and partner relationships were the two most frequently raised concerns for Aboriginal young people contacting **Kids Help Line** from 2001 to 2006, followed closely by peer relationships and then bullying.

Most of the calls about family relationship worries from young people were about issues with parents and brothers and sisters, extended family and friends. In many calls young people said they did not know who to talk to in their community. They were also concerned that talking with an adult would not help, or would make things worse.

There were also many calls about relationship issues, such as violence and relationship breakdowns.

The most common calls about friendship and bullying were about being left out of their friendship groups. There were also many calls about a friend who was being bullied or ongoing issues with friends they couldn't sort out.

Relationships with families

Older ones learn much from watching people they love. Many parents and carers say they want their kids to spend as much time with the family as the parents and carers did when they were younger.

As kids grow up they start to think more about 'who they are' and 'where they fit in'. It is also a time when they are developing skills for successful relationships. By mixing with other kids their own age they learn new social skills.



Things to think about

- Parents and carers have a huge influence on their older ones' lives.
- All parents and carers say they sometimes need some help, support and advice.
- It is normal for older kids to want to spend more time with their friends, but it shouldn't mean they ignore their families.
- Parents and carers can help their older ones through this stage by supporting them to make their own decisions.
- Older ones find it hard to try to take more control of their lives and still have a close relationship with their family.

- Older ones still need to feel positive about themselves and their connection to parents and carers, family and culture.
- It can be hard to know how much freedom to give older ones, how much 'attitude' to take, what kind of discipline works best, and how to talk with them.

Older ones and their friends

Friends play an important role in how older ones cope at school. Young people need friends to share both the fun times and the tough times. As your kids get older their friends become more important to them. They will turn more to their friends to discuss troubles, feelings, fears and doubts.

Friendship and bullying

Older ones who have good friends cope best with stress and situations in their lives because they have a caring group of people to turn to. Older ones with a good group of friends are less likely to be bullied than those with few friends.

Sometimes older ones think they have to join their friends who tease and bully other students. Families, schools and community groups can all help your older ones learn that they don't have to join in if their friends are hurting other students.

Friendships are very important to older ones

- Friends can help your older one develop skills and ideas to deal with issues (e.g. learn how to end a fight and still remain friends).
- Friends provide fun and excitement.
- Friends give advice to each other.
- Friends help each other out at school and in the community.
- Friends also help during times of stress or change (e.g. having a friend who is going through the same issues and can be someone to talk to).



How can I help my older ones make friends?

- Ask your older ones to invite friends they would like to know better over to your house so you can get to know them better too.
- Help your older ones to spend time after school and on the weekend with friends.
- Encourage your older ones to get to know their extended family even more

(uncles, aunts, cousins and grandparents and family friends).

- Help your older ones to make new friends outside of school through activities, such as hobbies, sport and music.

Yarning with your older ones about bullying

It is important to yarn about bullying with your older ones. **Yarning** with a person they trust and look up to will help them form their own opinions and beliefs about bullying. They will also feel more comfortable telling you if they are being bullied.

Many older ones won't want to tell anyone they are being bullied. But there are some things they might do or say that can be taken as warning signs.



What are some possible signs that your older ones are being bullied?

The signs include:

- less interest in school or not wanting to go to school
- complaints of headaches or stomach aches
- frequent damage or loss of items, such as clothing, property or school work
- injuries, such as bruises or cuts, and not telling how they happened
- trouble sleeping or having nightmares
- asking for extra lunch or pocket money
- being unhappy, miserable, moody and/or acting up
- having no friends to share free time with

What should I do if my older one is being bullied?

It is natural for parents and carers to feel upset and want to protect their kid if he or she is being bullied. However, an upset parent can cause the older ones more distress and can make them stop telling you if they are being bullied.



How should I respond?

- Listen carefully.
- Tell your older one you are glad he or she has talked to you about the

situation.

- Be aware of your own response and react in a calm, helpful and supportive way.
- Remind your older one that the bullying is not their fault.



What can I do to help?

- Ask your older one what you could do to help make the situation better (e.g. talk to the **AIEO** (ATA or AEW) or teachers).
- Make sure they know how to get help and support at school.
- Talk with the teacher or the **AIEO** (ATA or AEW) to find out what can be done.
- Help your older one work out what he or she could do to help make the situation better.
- Arrange follow-up meetings to discuss what happened.
- Keep in contact with the school, even if the situation seems to get better, to make sure the bullying stops.



What to tell older ones to do at school if they are bullied

1. **Stand up for yourself without violence.** If you look confident this will show you mean what you are saying. Try to talk with the person you are having an issue with. You could say 'Stop, what is your issue? Why are you bullying me?'
2. **Use humour** – this can sometimes work well in teasing or verbal bullying situations but may not be appropriate for physical bullying.
3. **Walk away** and stay away from the people bullying you and the place where it happens.
4. **Ignore the bullying** completely and carry on with what you were doing. Say to yourself, 'I don't deserve to be treated like this. I am not the one with the issue.'
5. **Ask for help** when other strategies you have tried are not working or if you feel you can't deal with the situation yourself. Asking for help is not dobbing. It is always okay to ask for help.



How to help older ones deal with arguments

You might want to tell them:

- stay calm and talk through the issue using a normal voice
- if you feel the situation is getting worse you can say, 'We are getting too angry/upset. We should talk about this later,' then walk away
- make sure you talk about it later, when you have both calmed down
- you can tell the other person how you feel (e.g. 'I felt **shame** when you told the rest of the team I was useless at football')
- you can let the other person explain how they feel about the issue
- listen to the other person without interrupting
- try to reach an agreement
- say sorry if necessary and try to find a way to be friends

Yarning with your kids about teasing

A person is teasing when they stir-up someone, either in a playful or an unkind way. Sometimes people tease in a fun way and don't hurt anyone's feelings.

Other times people tease in a mean way that upsets or hurts the feelings of the other person. Teasing becomes bullying if the person being teased is hurt by it and cannot stop it from happening. Mean teasing, jarring or chipping is when someone:

- makes fun of another person or group in a hurtful way
- plays upsetting jokes or tricks
- says things that are upsetting or worrying to someone

Sometimes people don't realise their teasing is bullying; they think what they are doing is 'just having fun', 'joking' or 'messing around'.



How can I help my teenager deal with teasing and hurtful comments?

Teasing, jarring, chipping and other hurtful comments are the most common form of bullying. Parents and carers can help their older ones deal with hurtful comments by suggesting these actions:

- pretend not to hear the comments - walk away
- ask yourself, 'Is this true and if so, do I care?'
- breathe deeply and look confident and walk away
- respond by asking them to stop
- try using humour, 'Yeah that's really funny; now leave me alone'

- ask for help from friends
- ask for help from a teacher or other trusted adults



How can I help my teenager stop teasing?

You can also help stop your kids doing hurtful teasing, jarring and chipping by listening and responding to what they say about others. Talk with your older ones if you hear them saying bad things about other kids or carrying yarns. Use a calm voice and say something like:

- ‘That’s a pretty bad thing to say about someone.’
- ‘How do you know this story is true?’
- ‘How would you feel if this story was told about you?’
- ‘How can you help the person who the story is about?’

The way you speak about body shapes, sizes, skin colour can affect your kids’ attitudes about appearance. Encourage your kids by example to say positive things about people.



Helping your older one to not bully

- Yarn with your older ones about what is acceptable behaviour and what is not (e.g. ‘We shouldn’t tease or carry yarns about people because they look different.’).
- Work with your family to establish rules about how to treat other people and each other.
- Yarn about friendship and help your older ones to make friends.
- Encourage your older ones to invite their friends over for visits and make their guests feel welcome.
- Improve your older one’s self-esteem by encouraging him or her to have a go at new activities and to think about their skills in a realistic way.

Yarning about cyber bullying

Mobiles, text messages, emails, websites

Another way of bullying has come about due to new technology: this is called ‘cyber’ bullying. **Almost all calls in Australia can be traced to the phone that made them!**

What is cyber bullying?

- harassing or abusive emails and phone messages
- making silent or abusive phone calls
- carrying a yarn and spreading rumours via email or phone messages
- sending someone bad SMS phone texts
- posting insulting messages on the internet
- following someone everywhere or sending them messages over and over using a phone or home computer (this is called ‘cyber-stalking’)

Cyber bullying, like other forms of bullying, is about relationships, power and control. If someone is harassing your kid on line, you can block emails and instant messages from that specific screen name. Be aware that people can easily change names; if harassment continues, contact the Internet Service Provider (ISP) listed on the webpage.



Some tips for your older ones to help them deal with all forms of **cyber bullying**:

- The best way to avoid this behaviour is to be careful about giving out personal information. **Never** share passwords, even with friends.
- If you do get bullied, you could think about changing your phone number and email address.
- If it continues, you could contact the police or your phone service provider to work out ways of protecting yourself.



Some tips for your older ones about how to deal with **email bullying**:

- Don't open messages from senders whose name you don't recognise.
- Tell an adult if you keep getting messages from senders you don't recognise or from people you don't want to communicate with.
- If you recognise the sender as someone who has sent upsetting messages in the past, tell an adult.
- Don't share your email address with anyone other than those you know well

and can trust.



Some tips for your older ones about how to deal with **chat rooms**:

- Remember you can never really be sure who you are talking to on the internet.
- If you are not comfortable with any messages that you read in a chat room, leave the chat room.
- Never give personal information (e.g. personal pictures, home address, telephone, your school or your name) to anyone you don't know really well.



Some tips for your older ones about how to deal with **website bullying**

- If there is a problem with website bullying, parents and carers need to get involved (e.g. checking chat rooms and SMS messages).
- Contact your Internet Service Provider (ISP) and notify them of the issue and request they:
 - trace the person responsible for creating the site
 - remove the site/material
- Ask a trusted adult to keep a record of the messages or website content.



Some tips for your older ones about how to deal with **mobile phone bullying**:

- Only give their mobile number to people they know well and can trust.
- Don't reply to any nasty messages.
- Don't forward nasty messages or yarns.
- Keep the messages in their phone as proof of being bullied or take a photograph of the message to keep a record.





What can I do to help my kids prevent cyber bullying?

- Keep computers and mobile phones in places at home where you can keep an eye on your kid when they are online.
- Make sure your kids switch off their computers and phones before they go to bed or at a time you agree on. Keep mobile phones in a central place when your kids go to sleep.
- Remind kids of the dangers of sharing their personal information online or giving someone else their passwords.

Yarning **with your older ones about bystanders**

A bystander:

- is someone who sees the bullying or knows that it is happening to someone else
- can either do something to stop the bullying, do nothing, or encourage the bullying and make it worse



Things to think about

- When older ones were asked what stops them from helping people who are bullied, the most common answers were, 'It's none of my business' and 'I didn't want to get involved'.
- When asked if they wanted the bullying to stop, most said, 'I don't like to see people being bullied'. Most young people don't like the bullying but are not sure if they should help. And they often don't know what to do to help the person being bullied.
- Your older one might ask you, 'If I am just watching the bullying and I am not involved, how can I be encouraging the bullying?' The answer is, 'Having people to watch makes people who bully feel powerful and the centre of attention. By paying attention to the person bullying, you are giving them what they want and that encourages them to keep bullying.'



If your older one sees someone being bullied, they could:

- let the those doing the bullying know that they are bullying
- refuse to join in with their bullying and walk away
- encourage others to walk away
- support the kid who is being bullied
- ask an **AIEO** (ATA or AEW), teacher or other support person for help
- support their friends and protect them from bullying by being there for them