

Bullies, Bigmouths and So-Called Friends

Jenny Alexander

This is an extract adapted from a book called Bullies, Bigmouths and So-Called Friends by Jenny Alexander. It offers lots of great advice on how to deal with bullies and build up your confidence in school and at home.

Prepare to say goodbye to bullies, bigmouths and so-called friends.

Bullies ...

You know the type. They push you around, shut doors in your face, send you threatening text messages, take your dinner money, damage your things, mock you and make you feel small.

Bigmouths ...

You know the type. They make sarcastic comments about you, spread nasty rumours, and say rude things behind your back.

So-called friends ...

Aren't they the worst? They turn their back on you without saying why, tell everyone your secrets, block you on social media and shut you out.

You

Everyone gets hassle from bullies, bigmouths and so-called friends sometimes, but some people handle it better than others.

Talk about it

If you don't want to talk about it, you're probably thinking ...

"I should be able to sort this out for myself."

Well, talking is the best way to start! Now you're probably saying ...

"But there's nothing anyone else can do!"

That's not the point! The point of talking about it is to make you

- feel better because bad secrets make you uncomfortable and ashamed
- see the situation more clearly because you can't see something you're sitting on
- act more calmly because bottled up feelings are like a shaken-up can of cola – lift the tab and it goes off in your face

The safest way to start is by talking to someone who can't interfere, take over or make you say more than you're ready to. Here are examples of some good talk partners: ChildLine (phone 0800 1111), your rabbit, a picture of your favourite team or singer, a diary or even a friendly tree.

Keep a diary

Keeping a diary, or a picture diary, is a good idea anyway. It helps you get things out of your system and see what's going on more clearly. A diary can also be used as evidence, along with any hurtful text messages and emails, if you decide to tell your parents and teachers.



Five top tips for keeping a diary

1. Use an ordinary notebook, not a proper diary. Then on days when you feel like writing a lot you'll always have enough room, and when you don't feel like writing at all you won't have a gap. And there's always space for pictures if you want to add them.
2. Keep your diary somewhere safe. No one should read it unless you want them to.
3. Write down the facts – dates, times, names and places.
4. Write down how you feel.
5. Be completely honest. Lying to your diary is like lying to yourself.

Five top tips for keeping a picture diary

1. Write the date at the top of a page in an ordinary notebook.
2. Draw yourself. It doesn't have to look like you. If you're feeling grumpy you could draw a hippopotamus, or if you're bright and cheerful you could draw a flower.
3. Put other people in if you want to. They don't have to look like themselves either.
4. Fill in some background with anything that feels right, maybe houses or trees, a street or a desert, a room or a black hole.
5. Add any useful words to remind you of how you felt or what happened.