

Rude, Mean, Bullying, Conflict: What's the Difference?



Rude: accidentally or unintentionally saying or doing something that hurts feelings or embarrasses someone	Mean: Saying or doing something on purpose to hurt someone; happens once or twice
Bullying: Behavior that is on purpose, repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power (*power = older, bigger, stronger, social power). Types of bullying include physical, verbal, relational, and cyberbullying.	Conflict: Conflict is a disagreement between friends or peers who are equal in power. There is always a solution to work through conflict, although it can take practice and isn't always easy!

When our children can correctly identify a behavior, then they can use the appropriate tools to handle the situation. Encouraging resiliency and empathy are cornerstones in how you can help.



Bullying

Teaching our children to be “up-standers” and support a classmate is the best way to help in a bullying situation. When a child feels they are being bullied, they can use HA-HA-SO to help themselves:

Help: Ask friends, teachers, and parents for help

Assert Yourself: Use an “I-message” in a calm voice

Humor: Make a joke about what was said, not who said it

Avoid: Stay away from those who are mean

Self-Talk: Think positive thoughts about yourself

Own it: Minimize it by agreeing, showing they don't affect you

Conflict

Conflict is often labeled or misunderstood as bullying. Conflict is a natural part of life and a natural part of friendships. Our children need the skills to deal with conflict in a safe and reasonable way. AA students are taught that there are at least six ways to handle conflict, through classroom guidance lessons and with visual aids around school:

- Share, take turns, compromise
- Ignore it
- Take a break
- Apologize
- Talk it out using an “I-message”
- Walk away



Additional Resources:

- [Conflict Resolution: Tips for Parents](#) (a great guide to help your child!)
- [Is it Rude, Is it Mean, or is it Bullying?](#) By Psychology Today
- [Bullying 101 Presentation](#) by PACER Center's Kids Against Bullying