**Coping with Teen Bullying**

Some people believe that bullying is just a fact of life that kids have to deal with. The problem is that these situations are often quite severe and could even lead to death and suicide in some cases. Even if the situation doesn’t get to that point, it can still have an emotional toll on your child. Here are some ways to tell if your child is being bullied and what to do if they are.

The first step to dealing with your child being bullied is to know it’s happening. Most children aren’t going to open up and tell you what’s going on; you have to be perceptive. The first sign is inventing ways to get out of school or certain situations. Bullied teens may also have trouble sleeping and concentrating. They can become depressed, irritable, or even physically ill. The best method is to know your child’s regular routine and look for any changes.

If possible, they should avoid dealing with a bully altogether. If a bully is in a particular hallway, take a different route to class. This shouldn’t be taken too far though; your child shouldn’t have to drastically alter their lives to avoid being attacked. But most bullies feed on reaction; if confronted the best action is to just walk away.

If they can’t avoid the bully, your teen should know how to deal with being around the bullies. Tell them to stand strong and talk forcefully; convince the bully that they can’t be pushed around. Never tell your child to resort to physical violence. This often just escalates the problem.

Schools are responsible for keeping children safe; that includes protecting them from each other. While some schools at times don’t seem so concerned if a teen is being teased or harassed, they should take action if your child is being physically or sexually attacked or threatened. Be sure to inform them of any incidences that may occur and follow up to see that action is being taken. If you’ve contacted the school repeatedly, go to the PTA or the school board. Find some way to make them listen and make changes.

The most important step to take when your child is being bullied is to restore their self confidence. Let them know that there’s nothing wrong with them, no matter what other people say. Feeling loved and accepted is the first step to recovery.