

Bullying and Exclusion



Here are some further tips and strategies that can be used to help autistic girls deal with bullying and exclusion:

- ⇒ She may misinterpret bullying. Help her to identify a situation that might be an accident verses someone who is intentionally being nasty.
- ⇒ Many schools adopt a restorative practices approach to bullying. Where she has been involved in an incident ensure that she has time to process what has happened and provide her with assistance to enable her to communicate her version of events accordingly. It may also be preferable to exempt her from a restorative practices.
- ⇒ Teach her the difference between what she can problem solve herself, for example sorting out a disagreement with someone; verses what she should get help for from an adult, for example physical or covert bullying.
- ⇒ Offer lunchtime structured activities such as drama, music, art or reading group which she can participate in it when she is not coping in the school yard or needs time out from friends.
- ⇒ Sometimes she may not be able to articulate how she feels so it may seem that she is coping when in reality she is not. She may be good at internalising her emotions so check in with her more regularly, especially if there is a change in her usual behavior.
- ⇒ She may have low self-esteem and may think that the bullying or excluding behavior she is experiencing is her fault. Help her understand that she is not doing anything wrong and that repetitive bullying or excluding behavior is never her fault.
- ⇒ Ensure she has a 'safe' person and place (e.g., teacher, principal, support staff, trusted friend) she can access if she is being bullied or excluded.

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- ⇒ Empower her to access this support group through a variety of methods (e.g., verbal, written, direct or indirect requests) when needed. A 'Bully Box' held at the office for students to anonymously report situations can be helpful for her to use if she is not comfortable revealing her identity.
- ⇒ Be aware of the different types of bullying. It can be less obvious for females and often takes more 'covert' forms (e.g., hidden or out of sight actions, including making up stories to get someone in trouble or spreading rumours).
- ⇒ Actively promote positive, inclusive attitudes through a whole school approach that actively involves students, staff and parents.