

THE INTERSECTION OF BULLYING & TRAUMA



NCTSN The National Child
Traumatic Stress Network

Bullying, and the trauma associated with its experience, can cause negative emotions and feelings that can leave a long-lasting psychological impact on a child. This can lead to a variety of traumatic stress reactions including PTSD. Children who experience trauma are more likely to be bullied or engage in bullying behavior. Knowing what increases a child's vulnerability to trauma caused by bullying is important.

1

REPETITION

Ongoing stress and repeated negative emotions increase children's vulnerability to trauma. The more it occurs, the more vulnerable they become.

2

DIGITAL MEANNESS

Hurtful or embarrassing content leave children feeling exposed and powerless simultaneously fueling anxiety about seeing their peers in-person.

3

SOCIAL SKILLS

Some children who experience trauma have difficulty interacting with peers and developing social skills, making them more likely to be the target of bullying.

4

FRIENDSHIPS

When the bully is/was a friend, the experience becomes much more traumatic. Children may lose their ability to trust and build healthy relationships.

5

ONGOING TRAUMA

Vulnerability to trauma is increased when a child has already been navigating and processing their ongoing traumas not related to bullying.



HOW TO HELP

Kids feel safer with a trusted adult who communicates with others about the bullying, and knowing someone is looking out for them helps ease their fears.