

# Expose the myths

## Objective:

To challenge and dispel myths, and to reinforce information that is factual, reliable and valid.

## Materials:



- Myths and Facts statements (see over page)



## Method:

- Explain this activity deals with 'biased information' and 'myths' about bullying. Clarify that 'myth' refers to untrue information that is passed around like a fact. Some myths may contain some accurate information, but generally they are not true.
- Divide the room into two parts with an invisible line – the left part is for myths and fiction; the right one is for facts and reality.
- Read the statements to your students – ask those that think the statement is a myth, to move to the left part; and those who take it as real, move to the right.
- After all the students have made their decision, take some time to discuss why they chose to stand where they are.
- Following discussion on each statement, explain to the students whether a statement is true or a myth.

Find out more...

All about bullying  
[www.bullyingfree.nz/  
about-bullying/](http://www.bullyingfree.nz/about-bullying/)

### Myths and Facts statements:

1	Bullying is a normal part of growing up.	<b>MYTH</b> Getting teased, picked on, pushed around, threatened, harassed, insulted, hurt or abused is never normal.
2	Bullying often resolves itself when you ignore it.	<b>MYTH</b> Bullying reflects an imbalance of power that happens again and again. Ignoring the bullying teaches students who bully that they can bully others without consequences. Adults and other students need to stand up for children and young people who are bullied, and ensure they are protected and safe.
3	Students with disabilities are at greater risk of being bullied.	<b>FACT</b> Students with disabilities (including physical, learning, developmental, intellectual, emotional and sensory disabilities) are at greater risk of being bullied.
4	All bullies have low self-esteem; that's why they pick on people.	<b>MYTH</b> Many people who bully are popular and have average or better than average self-esteem. They often take pride in their aggressive behaviour and control over the people they bully. People who bully may be part of a group that thinks bullying is okay. Some people who bully may also have poor social skills and experience anxiety or depression. For them, bullying can be a way to gain social status.
5	Bullying is usually something done by males.	<b>MYTH</b> A number of studies have shown that females bully equally as often as males. Often, females engage in more social bullying than males. This involves spreading rumours, excluding someone from a group or other harmful methods of bullying that humiliate the person within their social group.
6	Bullying is not only a school problem.	<b>FACT</b> Bullying occurs wherever people gather to live, learn, work or play. Although bullying tends to occur in school, we know that bullying is a community problem, not just a school problem.

Myths and Facts statements:

7	People are born bullies.	<b>MYTH</b> Bullying is a learned behaviour and these behaviours can be changed.
8	Children and young people who are bullied will almost always tell an adult.	<b>MYTH</b> Adults are often unaware of bullying – in part because many students don't report it. On average only a third of students who are bullied talk to an adult about the bullying. Targets may fear retaliation. They also may fear that adults won't take their concerns seriously, or will deal with it inappropriately.
9	Excluding someone from a group or spreading rumours can be as harmful as physical violence.	<b>FACT</b> Although the impact differs for different people, it may be at least as harmful to be excluded from a group or to have rumours spread about you. Many young people report that the daily psychological abuse of this type of bullying behaviour has long-lasting effects and is worse than physical violence.
10	It is easy to spot the signs of bullying.	<b>MYTH</b> It is not always easy to spot the signs of bullying as it is not always physical and obvious. Social and verbal bullying can often leave scars that people don't see.
11	Bullying usually occurs when there are no other students around.	<b>MYTH</b> Bullying incidents are typically public (rather than private) events that have witnesses. Studies based on playground observations have found that in most bullying incidents at least 4 other students were present. Although 9 out of 10 students say there is bullying in their schools, adults rarely see it even if they are looking for it.
12	Students grow out of bullying.	<b>FACT</b> Some students engage in bullying for a short time only and then stop, either because they realise it's wrong or they learn more appropriate behaviour. A small group of students continue to bully others. Unless someone intervenes, the bullying will likely continue and, in some cases, grow into violence and other serious problems.