

Gossip, Rumors and Bullying



# Gossip

What is gossip?



Gossip is a way of talking about someone that can lead to that person feeling unhappy or angry.

Gossip is when a simple story gets passed around and changes so that someone's feelings can be hurt, or someone could get into trouble when she hasn't done anything wrong.

It is also when someone deliberately starts a rumor about someone to hurt that person in some way. That is called malicious gossip. Malicious [say mal-ish-us] means that someone intends to hurt.

# What Gossip can do...

Suppose your friend told you something that was very personal and asked you not to tell anyone else. Maybe it was something about her mom and dad arguing about something. Then...



you tell someone else, they tell someone else and the story starts going round while the story is going round, it is changing as each person adds a bit more that may have happened

when the story gets back to her, it could be that everyone now thinks that your friends' parents are fighting, or even splitting up!

- ☹️ how upset and worried would your friend be if she heard that particular bit of gossip about her parents and herself?
- ☹️ how would her parents feel?
- ☹️ how would their friends and family feel?

# How to deal with gossip

The best way is not to gossip yourself. Think about what you are hearing.

If it is something that would embarrass or hurt the person who is being talked about, then:

say "I don't listen to gossip" and walk away.

don't pass on what you have heard.

tell a teacher if it is happening at school.



The only time you would tell a secret is if it is an 'unsafe' secret, and then you would tell one of your trusted adults to help keep your friend safe.

# What if the gossip is about you?

If someone is gossiping about you, tell that person calmly and quietly how you feel about it (it's a good idea to think about what you will say and choose a time when she is by herself).



Ask her how she would feel if people were gossiping about her.

Tell her it is an unkind thing to do.

Make it clear that gossiping is **not** OK.

Say you appreciate her listening to what you had to say, and that you hope she understands how you feel about gossip.

# Gossip can be dangerous

- Gossip is often a form of bullying...
  - spreading rumors about someone
  - sending texts or pictures on cell phones
  - posting on social network sites
  - telling lies about someone to get them into trouble.

Don't let rumors or gossip  
get between friendships!