Brothers, Sisters and Friends

From: Bullying at School: Advice for Families (1997) (page 9)

Brothers, sisters and friends often know that someone is being bullied long before teachers and parents do. What should they do? Sometimes the person being bullied asks them not to do anything. Sometimes they do nothing in case the bullies start to pick on them. But doing nothing usually means that the bullying carries on, or that the bullies become more confident and choose more victims. Part of the fun that bullies get comes from the reaction of bystanders. If you do nothing the bullies may think that you approve of what they are doing.

Here are some things you can do. If any of them do not work, don't give up. Try something else:

Persuade the person being bullied to talk to an adult - this may be a teacher or a parent.

Encourage the person being bullied to talk to you about what is happening.

Offer to speak to an adult on the bullied person's behalf. Let the bullies know that you are not so frightened of them that you will do nothing and that you are determined to see that they stop.

Raise the issue of bullying with the student council (if the school has one) or in discussions in subjects like English, drama, religious education, or social education. Involve as many people as possible. In particular try to make sure that teachers know what is going on - but, most of all, talk to somebody.

Here are some things you should not do.

Do not use violence against the bullies - you may end up being accused of being a bully yourself.

Do not tell the person being bullied to deal with the problem on their own - if they could they wouldn't have asked you for help.

Do not try to deal with things on your own.