



"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me."

This reply to playground name-calling has been taught to children by generations of parents. While the sentiments are true, it demonstrates how destructive language can be when it's used to hurt or humiliate.

Name-calling dehumanises the child or young person on the receiving end, making it easier for a perpetrator to bully, put down or abuse. The language of bullying and sexual abuse is deliberately vague and generalised making it easier to hurl insults about gender or ethnicity. It's much harder to insult someone when real names are used as it becomes personal.

Bullying uses language that dehumanises. Respectful relationships has its own language, and it's through this language that respect is shown, and personal safety and integrity are assured.

Parents can help children and young people to develop the language of respectful relationships in the following ways:

Use first or preferred names

The sound of a person's name respectfully spoken is music to the listener's ears. Teach kids to refer to other people by their it