

Bullying

CASEL Core Competencies: Relationship skills, self-awareness, social awareness, self-management

State Health Standards: Standard 4, Standard 5, Standard 6

Learner/Participant Objectives: Responsible decision-making: ethical responsibility, identifying problems, analyzing situations, evaluating, reflecting

Content Warnings: Bullying, suicide, physical abuse, mental abuse, discrimination

Facilitator Tips: Bullying can take many different forms based on platforms, context and relationships i.e. social media, during school or within families. Encourage youth to recognize the various ways that bullying occurs by offering diverse examples or asking youth to reflect and share.

Key Terms: Bullying, bystander, upstander

Time: 60–90 minutes

Materials: Writing utensils, whiteboard/large paper

Background: Statistics show bullying is on the rise both in-person and online. According to isafe.org, reports of cyber bullying is the primary form of bullying as opposed to physical bullying. Cyber bullying can include rumors, hazing, singling students out, harassment, stalking, catfishing and more.

Resources:

- [Bullying Statistics – Bullying Statistics](#)

References: This activity was adapted from Monique Burr Foundation for Children, Inc.

Prevention Education Programs: <https://mbfchildsafetymatters.org/resources/>

Source: <https://www.buckfirelaw.com/library/student-bullying-in-united-states-statistics-and-facts.cfm>

Procedure

- Inform Participants that today you will spend some time discussing an important topic. Bullying is wrong, and we want to teach all Participants about bullying and how to prevent it or stop it
- Many times, when people think of bullying, they think of fighting, arguing (drama), teasing, or acting mean. These are not acceptable behaviors, but they may not be bullying. An easy way to remember what bullying means is by using the acronym, or by thinking of the letters **RIP** (write RIP on the board):
 - **Repeatedly:** This means it happens over and over again, NOT just one time.
 - **Imbalance of Power:** This means someone who is bigger, stronger, and/or more popular than another person is using the imbalance of power to bully. It

- can include telling them to do something and even if the person does not want to do it, they do not have the courage or confidence to say “no.”
 - **On Purpose:** This means it happens on purpose. It does not happen by mistake, but instead it is done intentionally.
- Bullying occurs face-to-face, while cyberbullying occurs through electronic devices like computers or cell phones. How could cyberbullying happen? (Elicit responses such as texting, posts on social media, online gaming chats, etc.)
- Explain that some participants may have experienced bullying or cyberbullying or have seen it happening. Neither form of bullying is ever safe. Let’s talk about what to do if you see bullying and how to stay safe.
- Explain to Participants that there are **five different forms of bullying**. Write each form of bullying on the board and go through each one. Ask Participants to think about what that form of bullying looks like, feels like, sounds like, and why someone might bully someone in that manner.
 - **Physical bullying**
 - *Looks like:* shoving, hitting, pinching, punching, kicking, slapping, bruises, scratches
 - *Feels like:* pain, hurt, injury, sadness, anger, fear
 - *Sounds like:* yelling, slapping, broken bones
 - **Verbal bullying**
 - *Looks like:* name calling, teasing, gossiping, spreading rumors, telling lies, telling secrets, sexual harassment, threats
 - *Feels like:* pain, hurt, sadness, anger, fear
 - *Sounds like:* “stupid, nosey, nerd, geek” (remind Participants that saying “just kidding” after calling someone a name is still bullying)
 - **Social bullying**
 - *Looks like:* verbal or physical bullying in front of others, betrayal, silent treatment, spreading rumors, excluding, ditching
 - *Feels like:* pain, hurt, sadness, anger, fear
 - *Sounds like:* silent treatment, “stupid, nosey, nerd, geek”
 - **Intimidation bullying**
 - *Looks like:* a look, gesture, physical bullying, threats
 - *Feels like:* pain, hurt, sadness, anger, fear
 - *Sounds like:* verbal bullying, “I’m going to get you;” “you better watch out”
 - **Cyberbullying**
 - *Looks like:* mean comments or posts about someone else on social media, starting an argument or spreading rumors in messages or online videos, posting embarrassing or hurtful pictures or videos against the will of the person being shown
 - *Feels like:* pain, hurt, embarrassment, sadness, anger, fear
 - *Sounds like:* hurtful words in videos, yelling in video chats

- Remind Participants that different kinds of bullying often happen at the same time (calling someone a name while hitting them) and bullying often gets worse if it is not stopped right away (ex: a look or gesture could turn into shoving or hitting). Point out that all bullying causes pain, hurt, and fear. Explain that being bullied can play a role in sadness, loneliness, feeling bad about your body, skipping school, getting bad grades, headaches, stomach aches, trouble sleeping, and thinking about or trying to kill yourself.
- Write each rule on the board as you introduce it.
 - **Safety Rule #1 is Know What's Up.** This means you are aware of what bullying is in your environment and who you are talking to, online and offline. It is knowing what websites are appropriate or inappropriate. This also means that you are aware of the social interactions that are occurring around you, and you know what bullying behaviors look like. Raise your hand to tell us some behaviors of a bully. (Elicit responses)
 - **Safety Rule #2 is Spot Red Flags.** Think of a traffic light. When you see a traffic light that is red, what does the driver do? (Elicit responses)

Spot Red Flags means you STOP and use your awareness to determine if someone's behavior or social interaction online or offline is bullying or unsafe. This could be someone trying to control someone else or saying hurtful things to them on purpose. What are some Red Flags you should be aware of? (Allow Participants to offer suggestions, then follow up with these suggestions if they are not offered by Participants):

- A student or group of students picking on someone else.
- A student who does not have any friends.
- A student who sits alone.
- A student who never has a partner.
- A student who is always made fun of.
- Texting or typing on social media about someone in a hurtful way.

If you see Red Flags, you can then use the other Safety Rules you will learn today to avoid those bullying behaviors and dangers.

- **Safety Rule #3 is Make a Move.** This rule involves making a good decision when you see a Red Flag and getting away from an unsafe situation or staying away from those who are making a poor decision. Bullying behaviors are Red Flags. If you see bullying occur, you can choose to get away and stay away from the situation and spend your time with people who are going to make good, safe decisions.
- **Safety Rule #4 is Talk It Up.** With this rule, you can use an assertive voice to say NO to Red Flags, such as bullying. An assertive voice is when you say something

confidently, like you mean it, to make sure the listener understands. It's not yelling or being mean.

You can also be an **Upstander**, who is someone who sees the bullying occur, stands up to the bully, and helps the person being bullied. You can be an Upstander alone, or with a group of other people. The Upstander can use their assertive voice tell a bully to STOP, and that their behavior is hurtful. Unlike an Upstander, a Bystander sees bullying occur, but does nothing about it.

You can also be an Upstander by getting help from a safe adult. A safe adult is a trusted adult that you know well and that will listen and help you if you go to them to talk about an unsafe situation.

- Raise your hand to name one safe adult at our school. (Elicit responses, such as the teacher, the principal, a school counselor, etc.)
- Raise your hand to name a safe adult you know and trust outside of school. (Elicit responses)

If you see Red Flags, you can then use the other Safety Rules you will learn today to avoid those bullying behaviors and dangers.

You can also talk to a Safe Friend if you do not feel comfortable talking to a safe adult. Sometimes it is easier to talk to an adult if you have someone with you for support. If you have a good friend that you trust, they can go with you to go talk to a safe adult.

It is important to remember that telling is not snitching. Telling a safe adult will not only help you but will also help the person who is hurting you and it may also prevent them from hurting others in the future.

Now, I want you to imagine how you would feel if it were you being bullied. Trying to understand how another person feels is called having empathy. It might be easier to stand up for them and be their friend if we know how they might be feeling. Sometimes people refer to empathy as "putting yourself in someone else's shoes."

- **Safety Rule #5 is No Blame | No Shame.** This rule says that if you are ever hurt or bullied, you are never to blame, and you should never be ashamed to tell a safe adult.

Now that we have talked about what bullying is and is NOT, we are going to practice empathy.

- Give each Participant an activity sheet. Instruct the group to put themselves in the Upstander's shoes. Ask:
 - If you saw bullying happen, what could you do?
 - How could you show empathy?
- To get your brain thinking in the Upstander mindset, an example might be that when a bully makes fun of someone, an Upstander would NOT laugh at the joke.
- Take 5–10 minutes to write/draw what an Upstander would think/say/do if they saw bullying happening. Upstanders can also do the following to help the person being bullied:
 - Change the subject
 - Start a new conversation
 - Invite other people to walk away from the bully, including the person being bullied
 - Tell them objectively with your assertive voice that their behavior is bullying and say STOP
 - Tell a safe adult you trust about the bully's behavior, so they can help him/her
 - Model/show the bully positive skills about how to be a friend
- Many people have seen or have either been an Upstander or someone being bullied. But what do you do if you realize YOU are a bully? Here are a few things you can try:
 - Stop the bullying behavior immediately. People will see a new side of you.
 - Acknowledge that you might have hurt someone. Apologize to the person because we all make mistakes. If you own the mistake, you can move on faster.
 - Plan to change your behavior with the help of a safe adult or safe friend.
 - Engage in new behaviors and start to create positive, healthy relationships.
- Ask Participants to share stories of bullying if they want to.
- Acknowledge the group's effort! When we understand the feelings of someone else, we are being empathetic. Explain that each of the participants thought about how it might feel to be in someone else's shoes as a way of understanding another's point of view. Bullying is a serious topic that unfortunately affects many children every day. Be part of the solution by being empathetic to everyone!