

WHAT CAN WE DO?



BIAS, BULLYING, AND BYSTANDERS



"Every school and teacher should consider showing 'What Can We Do? Bias, Bullying, and Bystanders.' The film presents critical tools to help educators make our schools safe and secure places for all our students to learn and thrive."

~Michael Casserly, Executive Director, Council of the Great City Schools



Welcoming Schools



Welcoming Schools

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON THE DVD AND IN THIS PACKET

- ❖ Before Watching *What Can We Do?* Six Key Points to Keep in Mind
- ❖ Bias, Bullying and Bystanders – Tips for Elementary School Educators
- ❖ What Do You Say to ‘That’s So Gay’?
- ❖ Books to Engage Elementary Students on Bullying and Diversity
- ❖ Ice Breaker: A Reflection on Experiences with Bullying
- ❖ Practicing Responses to Students with Scenarios from *What Can We Do?*
- ❖ Ally – Bystander Activity for Educators and Parents/Guardians
- ❖ Bullying Facts – Read-Arounds: A Quick Way to Look at Research
- ❖ Terminology: Some Notes on Language About Bias and Bullying
- ❖ Lesson Plans
 - Words that Hurt, Words that Heal
 - Name-Calling and Feeling Safe in School
 - Making Decisions: Ally or Bystander
- ❖ Acknowledgements and Film Credits
- ❖ *What Can We Do?* Discussion Guide and Handout References



Welcoming Schools

Welcoming Schools is a comprehensive, LGBT-inclusive approach to creating respectful and supportive elementary schools for all students and their families. It is grounded in research that clearly links improved academic achievement, better social-emotional well-being, and an inclusive school climate.

Welcoming Schools addresses:

- ❖ **Respecting family diversity** including adoptive families, foster families, children being raised by grandparents, single parent families, and LGBT headed families.
- ❖ **Avoiding gender stereotyping** including stereotypes related to gender roles and expectations, gender identity and expression, and gender expansive children.
- ❖ **Ending hurtful name-calling and bullying** including the many types of bias-based comments and harassment that students experience.

Welcoming Schools provides tools and resources including:

- ❖ Professional development training for administrators, educators and all adults in the school community.
- ❖ Educational materials for school leaders, educators, parents/guardians to make teachable moments and intervention more effective.
- ❖ Lesson plans aligned with Common Core Standards.
- ❖ Engaging short films that feature students and teachers highlighting what they hear in school, what they need, and what can be done to create a more welcoming school environment.
- ❖ Technical assistance to meet the specific needs of school districts, schools, and community based organizations.
- ❖ Guides for school, community, and family engagement sessions.
- ❖ Extensive annotated bibliographies addressing family diversity, gender identity and stereotyping, LGBT topics for students, and bullying.

75% of students who were harassed report that it they were targeted because of their identity, including, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and sexual orientation.

CA Healthy Kids Survey 2009-11



BEFORE WATCHING *WHAT CAN WE DO?* SIX KEY POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND

- ❖ **Safe students are more successful students.** Research clearly shows that there is a connection between social and emotional well-being, school connectedness and improved academic achievement.
- ❖ **Some words DO hurt more than others.** Bullying and hurtful name-calling based on identity has more severe effects than other kinds of bullying.
- ❖ **It takes more than a few good lesson plans to create safe schools.** Programs that involve the entire school community including administrators, teachers, other school staff, parents and guardians, and students are most effective in creating a school environment that reduces hurtful, mean behavior and allows students to thrive.
- ❖ **Young students see and know more than we think.** Most educators underestimate the amount of bullying and name-calling that students experience. Students are counting on the adults in the school community to help them figure out what to do about it.
- ❖ **There are many ways to be an ally.** Students can learn to support someone who is hurt by bullying behaviors by speaking out, seeking support from an adult, listening to someone who has been hurt, talking to those involved, and learning about and appreciating differences.
- ❖ **Noticing differences is natural. We can learn not to make negative judgments on the basis of difference.** When a student notices differences, adults' responses can set in motion that student's understanding and acceptance of difference – or the opposite. These times can be valuable “teachable-moments.”

When students report a more severe bullying climate, school-wide passing rates on standardized tests are up to 5% lower.

Virginia High School Safety Study, 2008

Compared with students harassed for other reasons, students who report they were harassed for their race, religion, ability, perceived sexual orientation, or gender:

- have higher rates of depression and drug use;
- are up to twice as likely to have thought about or attempted suicide;
- are more likely to have lower grades and skip school;
- are twice as likely to have their personal belongings stolen or deliberately damaged at school; and
- are up to 4 times as likely to have been threatened with a weapon at school.

Stephen Russell et al., 2012, *American Journal of Public Health*

WHY THIS FILM?

“You’re Gay.” “Your skin is too brown.” “Fatty.” “Your religion is fake.” “Estúpido.”

- ❖ These are the actual words of students in the film.
- ❖ These are the kinds of words and phrases that elementary school students say they hear their peers use to hurt one another.
- ❖ Students want adults in the school community to help them out.
- ❖ Educators want to know what they can do.

Both children who are targeted and children who exhibit bullying behavior have lower academic achievement in school.

Joseph Drake, 2003
Journal of School Health

Schools everywhere are working to address bullying and harassment in meaningful and effective ways. We hope this film will stimulate staff and classroom conversations that directly address the kinds of hurtful language that students use and overhear every day. It saddens our hearts to highlight these words and phrases but the film also restores our faith by demonstrating caring, proactive teachers working to understand and stop the bullying and bias in their schools.

While all educators want their students to feel safe from bullying many feel nervous talking about diversity – race, ethnicity, gender, gay slurs, etc. – with students. The teachers featured in this film, model ways to engage students in these conversations by using Welcoming Schools lesson plans with their students.

What Can We Do? Bias, Bullying, and Bystanders illustrates:

- ❖ Elementary school students are capable of talking respectfully about differences.
- ❖ Elementary students understand the power of words that target a person’s identity.
- ❖ Elementary school students want to be allies to their peers.
- ❖ Professional development for staff and engaging lesson plans for students are critical components of creating safe and welcoming schools.

Students who experience acceptance at school are more highly motivated, engaged in learning and committed to school.

Karen Osterman, 2000
Review of Educational Research



GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN THE *WELCOMING SCHOOLS* APPROACH

❖ **Be an Upstander Yourself.** You are a role model for students. They watch what you do and will follow your lead. They notice whether you stop hurtful name-calling or comments based on skin color, gender, religion, weight, ability, family structure etc. They notice what topics you never talk about. They worry they might be the next targets of a mean remark.

Adult models of intervention are more effective than peer modeling with third graders; by sixth grade peer models are more effective.

Aboud & Joong, 2008

❖ **Practice. Practice. Practice.** Improving your skills at anything takes practice – including stopping hurtful bullying and teasing. Practice with colleagues what you could say to students to stop bullying comments and let students know that you expect respect and accept diversity. Practice responding to students' questions about differences. It's ok to not be perfect or perfectly comfortable before you start this in your classrooms. You will have many opportunities over the course of a school year to get it right. Ignoring the situation won't make it go away. (See *Cultivating Conversations About Difference* and *Responding to Student's Questions Professional Development* activities on the website.)

❖ **Teach your students how to be allies.** Work with your students so they know what they can do if they witness bullying – including talking with or befriending the targeted student, confiding in an adult, talking with the student who is being mean, causing a distraction to help stop the harassment, or speaking up in the moment. (See *Making Decisions: Ally or Bystander* lesson on the DVD or website.)

❖ **Involve families.** Show the film or trailer at an evening event for parents/guardians to spark discussion on bullying and bias, and help them see how they can be part of the school community effort to develop a welcoming school. Host a family night with a panel of diverse families from your school community. Hold a book night with students or teachers reading from books that show a range of diversity – including racial, ethnic, religious, economic status or family structure. (See *Community Building and Education for Parents/Guardians: An Evening Screening of What Can We Do?* On the DVD or website.)

❖ **Engage your students.** Read books about bullying prevention such as *One* by Kathryn Otoshi or *Benjamin and the Word/Benjamin y La Palabara* by Daniel Olivas to spark discussions on hurtful teasing and ways to be an ally to classmates. Discuss with students the real putdowns they hear, paying close attention to the ones that target a child or their families' identity. (See *Words that Hurt, Words that Heal* lesson and *Books to Engage Students on Bullying and Diversity* on the DVD or website.)



FILM DISCUSSION GUIDE:

Preparing to watch the film:

Whether you watch this film alone or with a group, preparation helps to set the tone and space to get the most out of your viewing. Here are some suggestions:

- ❖ Take a look at the three lesson plans demonstrated in this video. (On the DVD and website.)
- ❖ Review additional materials on the DVD and WS website related to bullying, bias, and best practices for effective programs, definitions of bullying and bias.
- ❖ Familiarize yourself with your school or district policies and/or procedures regarding bullying and bias.

Elementary school staff often underestimates the number of students involved in frequent bullying. While the majority of school staff estimates that less than 10% of their students were bullied in the past month, over 30% of students say they were frequently bullied.

Catherine Bradshaw, 2007
School Psychology Review

Before you watch *What Can We Do?*

- ❖ Brainstorm a list of all the ways you think students might be experiencing bullying and bias especially those things that are based on their identity or who they are.
- ❖ Consider which of these are the most difficult for you to address and why.

Introducing the Film:

- ❖ This was filmed in two public schools that worked with a Welcoming Schools consultant who provided ongoing professional development for the entire faculty.
- ❖ The film shows the first time that these teachers have taught the lessons. We thank them for being brave enough to allow us to film in their classroom. The film only depicts a portion of each lesson. Using the actual lesson plans as a guide, viewers can consider nuances of the lesson that may not have been depicted in this film.

While you watch, pay special attention to the following:

- ❖ What topics the lessons address.
- ❖ The issues that children are “dealing with.” Notice all of the forms of bias or put-downs that the children mention in the film.
- ❖ How other students respond to and react to these issues.
- ❖ How the teacher addresses these issues.
- ❖ What preparation was needed by the teacher to implement the lessons.

57% of interventions by elementary age children stops the harassment within 10 seconds.

D.Lynn Hawkins, 2001
Social Development

Post viewing discussion – allow time for reflection and deeper learning

I. Sharing and Reflection: Initial Reactions to the Film

- ❖ What stood out to you while watching the film?
- ❖ What moved you? What surprised you?
- ❖ What steps do you think your school would need to take to incorporate these lesson plans in your classrooms?"
- ❖ Did you notice the different forms of bias mentioned within the lessons, either by teachers or students? What were all the different kinds of comments mentioned by the students? How did this compare with your brainstorm list?
- ❖ What were some of the responses you noticed among the children when certain things were said?
- ❖ What kinds of biases are the students in the film especially looking to adults to handle?
- ❖ What did you notice about the teacher(s) in response to student comments and questions?
- ❖ How was what you saw in the film similar or different to the *Welcoming Schools* lesson plans?

Bystanders are more likely to act when they perceive they have the skills to do so.

Aboud & Joong, 2008

2. What Can You Say to Stop Hurtful Language and Educate Students? Discussing and Practicing Sample Responses

Saying “don't use that word” is not enough. We need to educate students about why something is hurtful and not simply send them to the principal’s office or assume they understand. Check out: *Bias, Bullying and Bystander: Tips for Elementary School Educators* and *What Do You Say to “That’s So Gay”?* (Handouts are available on the DVD and website.)

Here are sample responses to things you might overhear students say. You can look for more samples within the handouts mentioned above. Also, you can start to develop and practice your own responses. Try these out...

- ❖ “Do you know what that means? It’s a put down for someone’s religion. There are many different religions in this world and in this school we have respect for all religions.”
- ❖ “You may not have meant to hurt anyone, but saying ‘that’s gay’ can hurt those around you. Do you know what that means? And if they say no, you can respond: “When used respectfully, it describes a man and a man or a woman and a woman who love each other. In our school we don't use words that describe people as putdowns.”
- ❖ “That was a stereotype. Stereotypes are a kind of lie and they hurt people’s feelings.”

Some Scenarios From *What Can We Do?*:

- ❖ “He said if you touch the floor it will turn you gay.” *How would you handle this? Is there a way to make clear that a person being gay is not a problem, but using the word “gay” as a putdown is not OK.*
- ❖ “He called him chocolate balls.” *How might you respond to this and other slurs based on skin color? What do you think about the teachers sharing her own experience in her response? In what kinds of scenarios might you share some of your own experiences?*
- ❖ “Adults can just make it worse...” *Why do you think students think this sometimes? What can you and all adults do to offer support, be available, and not make it worse when children tell us something is going on? (See below for what some 5th graders said.)*
- ❖ In response to a *comment* about race one student states, “I would get an adult. Because if I would just do it myself, I’d probably get in trouble. Because I might start something, too. You never know.” *What might you say to support the child in their decision? Keep in mind, a student who is self-aware and avoids conflict is probably showing good judgment – but also needs adult support.*

3. Engage Students in Deeper Learning:

Use open-ended questions during “teachable moments.” We don't always have to discipline children who are using inappropriate language; often it is simply a matter of education. And, isn't that what schools are all about? Here are some sample questions to help students better understand why what they are saying may be inappropriate and even hurtful to others.

- ❖ Why do you think it is wrong for boys to wear pink?
- ❖ Has anyone called you a name that made you feel bad?
- ❖ What are the things that help you to feel safe at school?

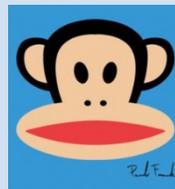
4. Skill Building

Allow time for review and practice to improve your skills and comfort responding to bias in the classroom

- ❖ Give educators the opportunity to practice teaching these lessons with their peers.
- ❖ Have multiple books available as suggested in the lesson plans. Review and think about how they could be used in a classroom. Have participants match them to the lessons they are aligned with.
- ❖ Make sure teachers have the chance to debrief the lesson after they practice.
- ❖ Have educators determine where in the current curriculum these lessons would fit.

A boy in the film said he was told, “You’re wearing a girl’s shirt!” and he said, “OK, I’ll change my shirt.”

The shirt the boy referred to had this Paul Frank monkey on it:



THE LESSONS PLANS IN *WHAT CAN WE DO?*

- ❖ **Words that Hurt, Words that Heal** with the book “One” by Kathryn Otoshi: This lesson, appropriate for grades K – 3, illustrates the power of being an ally as well as the impact of bullying on students who are targeted as well as those who are bystanders. Generates discussion with students about ways they have experienced or witnessed bullying. Looks at ways classmates could stand up for each other.
- ❖ **Name-Calling and Feeling Safe in School:** A lesson appropriate for all grade levels that helps educators talk about the safe and unsafe places at school – both physical and emotional. A lesson like this, done school wide at every grade level, can help increase safety and inform staff if there are any safety issues that need to be addressed.
- ❖ **Making Decisions: Ally or Bystander:** This lesson for grades 4 - 6 helps students sort out their choices and consider how they will respond – do nothing, tell the person to stop, tell an adult or talk to the child being harassed – to different bullying or hurtful teasing situations.

According to the 5th graders in a study of over 13,000 students in grades 5-12:

Peer actions that make things better are:

- spending time or talking with them at school,
- helping them get away from the situation,
- making a distraction,
- and helping them tell an adult at the school.

Peer actions that make things worse are:

- blaming them for what happened,
- making fun of them for being teased or for asking for help,
- and ignoring the situation.

Adult actions that make things better are:

- listening, giving advice and encouragement,
- checking in over time to see if things got better,
- increasing adult supervision,
- and disciplining the student who was mean.

Adult actions that make things worse are:

- telling them to stop tattling,
- telling them to solve it themselves,
- telling the student that they should have acted differently,
- and ignoring the situation.

Stan Davis and Charisse Nixon, 2010, Youth Voice Research Project

A SCHOOL-WIDE WELCOMING SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK WITH *WHAT CAN WE DO?*

The three lesson plans featured in *What Can We Do?* can help educators, parents and students become part of a full school approach to developing a more welcoming, caring and safe school. Here are some ideas to use these lesson plans and the *Welcoming Schools* approach as a way to jump start critical conversations with educators, parents/guardians, and students.

Professional Development

- Implement activities in the film and guide during professional development time or staff meetings for adult participation prior to introducing lessons to students. This will help educators become more comfortable with the activities and refine the lesson plans to best meet the needs of the school.
- Use the *Ally and Bystander* lesson as an activity in a training or at a staff meeting. Adults can respond as students or adults – providing insight into student experiences when bullying occurs and adult experiences when they are confronted with challenging behaviors from colleagues, parents, or students. Through this activity, adults will better understand what it means to be an ally.
- Use the *Words that Hurt, Words that Heal* lesson and the book, *One*, in a professional development session as a model for creating a unified school climate.
- Take the time to practice interrupting hurtful language. See: *Bias, Bullying and Bystander: Tips for Elementary School Educators* and *What Do You Say to “That’s so Gay?”* (On the DVD)
- Allow time to review books and lessons to improve your skills and comfort responding to bias in the classroom.



Parent / School Community Engagement

After educators have participated in *Welcoming Schools* professional learning and have practiced or role-played the **WCWD** lessons, hold a community wide evening for parents, guardians, and care givers to discuss developing a more welcoming, caring school community. This helps provide a frame for unity, visibility and ownership by the wider school community.



- Have a key person in your school community provide a clear frame for why developing a welcoming school is important for all students.
- Show the trailer for *What Can You Do?* (which is almost like a 3 minute film) Use this a jumping off point to discuss steps you are taking to stop bullying and harassment.
- Include a dramatic reading by students or a teacher of the book, *One*, used in the film.
- Share student anecdotes of hurtful teasing or ways that students have stood up for each other.

- Do the activity version of the lesson, Making Decisions: Ally or Bystander. This gives people time to really think about how students and adults may respond to bullying and bias-based comments.
- Display some of the books that you may use in lessons as you develop a more welcoming school.
- For the event, have displays of student work visible for parents and guardians to see. Feature drawings or writing about family, being an ally, welcoming all to you school...
- If you have an existing anti-bullying program or social-emotional learning program, discuss how Welcoming Schools work integrates with those programs.

Student Engagement

The lesson activities featured in *What Can We Do?* provide structure for school-wide *Welcoming Schools* engagement including:



- integration of common language,
- recognition of various aspects of name calling and bullying and
- development of intentional action and process to create a caring school climate.

The Lesson: Words that Hurt, Words that Heal (Grades K-3)

In the earliest grades, work with students to identify hurtful actions and caring responses. Empower students by introducing language and intentional behavior, to create a compassionate and engaging climate. Be sure to stress that allies “stand up “ for any target—not just friends. Tie the ally concept into discussing the importance of including and helping the person who acts with aggressive behavior so they also remain a part of the caring community.

The Lesson: Name-Calling and Feeling Safe in School (Grades K-5)

Through a mapping activity and discussion, students identify putdowns and locations where students are more vulnerable to name-calling and bullying.

- Over the course of a week, have many (or all) classes in the school use this lesson as a school-wide evaluation tool.
- Educators can share their individual classroom responses to generate a school-wide map of hot spots that need attention.
- The original mapping activity can serve as a pre-survey and an end of the year mapping activity can serve as a post-survey. Upper grade students can develop a report on assessment of data.
- With the each class review the list of action steps they developed during the lesson. Decide on actions students could take to make your school feel safer. Develop and carry out a plan to implement those actions.

The Lesson: Making Decisions: Ally or Bystander (Grades 4-6)

For the older elementary students this lesson helps them consider how they would respond when witnessing bias-based put-downs and mean behavior.

With thought provoking activities, this lesson provides opportunities for students to practice intervention and understand their roles as allies. This lesson can help develop common language and understanding across the classrooms in these grade levels.

School-wide activities

- Adopt school-wide terminology for allies, witnesses and bystanders. Include terms on word walls and vocabulary lists for each grade level. See *Definitions for Students* and *A Few Notes on Language on Bullying and Bias*.
- Hallway Displays: Each grade level or class could have a time that they are responsible for creating a Welcoming Schools bulletin board. As a follow-up to lessons, students could create visual or written work that represents: ways to be an ally, welcoming diversity, or welcoming all students and their families in your school.
- Ensure the school library and/or classrooms have books to engage students in discussions of how they can be allies to each other, understanding and respecting differences, and the impact of mean teasing or bullying. See the bibliography: *Books to Engage Elementary Students on Bullying and Diversity*.
- Develop a Welcoming Schools or Caring Community committee to assess the needs for your school. The committee could help develop plans improving school climate for an up-coming school year; plan for professional development; organize parent and school community meetings; assess school climate among students; and check-in over the course of the year on actions taken to create a caring community. Contact a *Welcoming Schools* regional consultant for advice.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON THE DVD

- ❖ Trailer for *What Do You Know? Six to Twelve Year-olds Talk About Gays and Lesbians*. Directed by Ellen Brodsky. Produced by *Welcoming Schools*.
- ❖ Before Watching *What Can We Do?* Six Key Points to Keep in Mind
- ❖ Bias, Bullying and Bystanders – Tips for Elementary School Educators
- ❖ What Do You Say to ‘That’s So Gay’?
- ❖ Books to Engage Elementary Students on Bullying and Diversity
- ❖ Ice Breaker: A Reflection on Experiences with Bullying
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- ❖ Acknowledgements and Film Credits
- ❖ *What Can We Do?* Discussion Guide and Handout References



WELCOMING SCHOOLS RESOURCES ON THE WEB

- ❖ **Home Page** www.welcomingschools.org/
- ❖ **Film: *What Can We Do?*** www.welcomingschools.org/what-can-we-do/
- ❖ **Film: *What Do You Know? Six to Twelve Year-olds Talk About Gays and Lesbians***. See the trailer on the DVD. www.welcomingschools.org/what-do-you-know-the-film/
- ❖ **Teachable Moments** www.welcomingschools.org/teachable-moments/
What Do You Say to “That’s So Gay”?; Help with responding to students questions;
- ❖ **Cultivating Conversations About Difference:** A professional development session that helps adults turn student questions and concerns into teachable moments.
- ❖ **Resources** www.welcomingschools.org/resources/
Bibliographies on family diversity; bullying, and gender; Legal information; Lesson Plans; Linking *Welcoming Schools* to Academic Standards.
- ❖ **Regional Consultants** www.welcomingschools.org/experts-in-your-area/
Available around the country for professional development trainings; Planning for film screenings; Developing a respectful, caring school environment.
- ❖ **Bullying and Name-calling Resources** www.welcomingschools.org/bullying-name-calling/
- ❖ **Gender Stereotyping and Identity Resources** www.welcomingschools.org/gender-stereotyping/
- ❖ **Family Diversity Resources** www.welcomingschools.org/family-diversity/





BEFORE WATCHING *WHAT CAN WE DO?* SIX KEY POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND

1) **Safe students are more successful students.**

Research clearly shows that there is a connection between social and emotional well-being, school connectedness and improved academic achievement.

2) **Some words DO hurt more than others.**

Bullying and hurtful name-calling based on identity has more severe effects than other kinds of bullying.

3) **It takes more than a few good lesson plans to create safe schools.** Programs that involve the entire school community including administrators, teachers, other school staff, parents and guardians, and students are most effective in creating a school environment that reduces hurtful, mean behavior and allows students to thrive.

4) **Young students see and know more than we think.** Most educators underestimate the amount of bullying and name-calling that students experience. Students are counting on the adults in the school community to help them figure out what to do about it.

When students report a more severe bullying climate, school-wide passing rates on standardized tests are up to 5% lower.

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- are twice as likely to have their personal belongings stolen or deliberately damaged at school;
- are more likely to report being depressed and attempting suicide;
- are more likely to skip school and have lower grades;
- and are up to 4 times as likely to have been threatened with a weapon at school.

Stephen Russell et al. 2012
American Journal of Public Health.

Key strategies to change the school climate and norms of behavior include:

- the whole school working together,
- establishing school wide rules and consequences for bullying,
- educator training,
- parent engagement,
- classroom management,
- playground supervision,
- and cooperative group work.

Maria Ttofi and David Farrington, 2011
Journal of Experimental Criminology

Elementary school staff often underestimates the number of students involved in frequent bullying. While the majority of the school staff estimated that less than 10% of their students were bullied in the past month, over 30% of the students actually said they were frequently bullied.

Catherine Bradshaw et al. 2007
School Psychology Review

5) **There are many ways to be an ally.**

Students can learn to support someone who is hurt by bullying behaviors by speaking out, seeking support from an adult, listening to someone who has been hurt, talking to those involved, and learning about and appreciating differences.



6) **Noticing differences is natural.**

We can learn not to make negative judgments on the basis of difference. When a student notices differences, adults' responses can set in motion that student's understanding and acceptance of difference – or the opposite. Use these times as “teachable-moments.”

**BE WHO
YOU ARE!**

According to the 5th graders included in a study of over 13,000 students in grades 5-12:

Peer actions that make things better are:

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- helping them get away from the situation,
- making a distraction,
- and helping them tell an adult at the school.

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- and ignoring the situation.

Adult actions that make things better are:

- listening, giving advice and encouragement,
- checking in over time to see if things got better,
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- and disciplining the student who was mean.

Adult actions that make things worse are:

- telling them to stop tattling,
- telling them to solve it themselves,
- telling the student that they should have acted differently,
- and ignoring the situation.

Stan Davis and Charisse Nixon, 2010
Youth Voice Research Project

- Babies and children are driven to make sense of their world. One way they do this is to sort things and people by categories.
- Infants as young as 6 months of age notice skin color differences.
- By age 2-3, toddlers pick up the implicit and explicit messages about categories of people including stereotypes.

Meagan Patterson & Rebecca Bigler, 2006, *Child Development*;
Phyllis Katz, 1997, *Race, gender, and young children*
Lawrence Hirschfeld, 2008, *In the Handbook of race, racism, and the developing child*

Conversations about racial differences and inequities are associated with lower levels of bias in young children.

Phyllis Katz, 2003
American Psychologist



Welcoming Schools

Bias, Bullying, and Bystanders

Over three-quarters of middle school students who are harassed say that the **harassment is related to bias** about their race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, actual or perceived sexual orientation, religion, or disability.¹

Children who experience **discrimination based on their race or ethnicity** are more likely to report **depression and difficulty paying attention in school**.

Students **targeted with anti-gay put-downs** are more likely to report higher levels of depression and anxiety and a **lower sense of school belonging regardless of their sexual orientation**.

Students in classrooms where teachers establish classroom norms that **explicitly value diversity are less likely to be teased** based on ethnicity and are more likely to value school, feel like they belong, and get better grades.

Student and adults who **perceive that others in their school would jump in to stop bullying** are **more likely to intervene** when they witness bullying.

“A team of educators and parents in my school chose books that included three themes – race, economic status, and families with same-sex parents – to include in their language arts curriculum. We hosted a meeting for families to review the books, ask questions, and to learn how this initiative tied into bullying prevention and academic achievement. Many parents said they were uncertain about how to have these conversations with their children and they thanked us for providing a chance to think about these topics.”

– Elementary School Principal

¹ See www.welcomingschools.org for research citations.

Tips for Elementary School Educators

Be an upstander. You are a role model for your students. They watch what you do and will follow your lead. They notice whether you stop hurtful name-calling or comments based on bias: skin color, gender, religion, weight, ability, family structure. They worry if they might be the next target of a mean remark.

Practice. Practice. Practice. Improving your skills at anything takes practice – including stopping hurtful bullying and teasing. Practice with colleagues what you could say to students to stop harassment, to educate, and to let all students know that you expect respect and accept diversity. Practice responding to students' questions about differences.

Teach your students how to be an ally. Work with your students so they know what they can do if they witness bullying – including talking with or befriending the targeted student, confiding in an adult, talking with the student who is being mean, causing a distraction to help stop the harassment, or speaking up in the moment.

Involve families. Host a family night with a panel of diverse families from your school community. Hold a book night with students or teachers reading from books that show a range of diversity – including racial, ethnic, religious, economic status or family structure.

Use books to engage students.

Read books featuring diverse families such as *The Great Big Book of Families* by Mary Hoffman or *The Family Book* by Todd Parr. Create hallway displays with students' drawings of their families or important adults/relatives in their lives.

Read books such as *One* by Kathryn Otoshi or *Benjamin and the Word / Benjamin y La Palabra* by Daniel Olivas to spark discussion of hurtful teasing and ways to be an ally to classmates. Discuss with students the real put-downs they hear, paying close attention to ones that target a child's or their family's identity.

“I choose books to read to my students as a way to hear from them what they experience in school. When I used the book, *One*, students came up to me afterwards to tell me ways that they had been hurt and seen others hurt. I let them know that it's not tattling to try to get someone out of trouble. That's different than coming to me just to get someone in trouble!”

– Elementary School Educator

What You Can Say to Stop Hurtful Language and Educate

- That was a stereotype. Stereotypes are a kind of lie and they hurt people's feelings. Everybody is different with their own strengths and own way of being.
- In this classroom, I want everyone to be respected. Making negative comments about a person's skin color is very disrespectful and will not be accepted. It's what's inside that is important.
- Do you know what that word means? It's a put down for someone's religion. There are many different religions in this world and in this school we respect all religions.
- It's unacceptable to say that to a classmate. All students are welcome here at (name of school).
- You may not have meant to hurt anyone, but saying "That's gay" can hurt those around you. Do you know what gay means?

If no, a simple response could be – the word gay is used to describe a man and a man or a woman and a woman, who love each other and want to be family to each other.

In the future I expect you to use that word respectfully and not in a hurtful way.

- That is not okay. I will not allow someone to be left out in this classroom because of where they come from or how they talk.
- It is not ok to call someone a "girl" to insult them. When you call someone a girl as a putdown, you are insulting ALL girls.
- It's true that some boys don't like to play with dolls but some boys do! Just like some of you like to draw and some of you don't and some of you like to play kickball and others don't. No one should have to pick and choose what they do just because they are a boy or a girl.

“When my son was five years old, he went to a party with his classmate wearing a pink shirt and sparkly blue sneakers. An adult mistakenly referred to him as a girl in front of the whole group. One child in the room said, “He’s not a boy. He’s a boy who dresses like a girl.” Most of the children in the room began laughing. Then one child said loudly, “He’s my friend, stop laughing at him!” The laughter stopped immediately. If this young child could speak up and make a difference, then surely we can too.”

– Mother of a 3rd grader

Engage Students in Teachable Moments

When elementary school students use language based on bias about another child's identity, they may just be repeating what they have heard. They may have no idea how hurtful that language is.

Instead of just, “Don't say this,” follow-up with open ended questions like “Why do you think that?” and “Do you know what that means?”

Questions that lead to deeper conversations:

- Why do you think it's wrong for boys to wear pink?
- Has anyone called you a name that made you feel bad?
- Why did you think it was okay to make fun of the way someone looks?
- Do you know what the word faggot means?
- Where have you heard that kind of language before?

“In my classroom when students would use the word gay in a negative way I would always tell them to not say that. One day I overheard a student talking to friends about a gay relative in a respectful way. One of the students saw me nearby and whispered, “Shhh, stop! Mr. B doesn't like gay people.” That was an aha moment for me. I learned that stopping negative language is not enough. We need to educate students about why language is hurtful and help them appreciate the diversity in our schools and in the world.”

– 2nd Grade Teacher



WHAT DO YOU SAY TO 'THAT'S SO GAY'

STOP IT

- Keep it simple with quick responses. If you have the time and opportunity to educate on the spot, do it. If you don't, make time later.
- You could say:
 - "Remember, we don't use put-downs in this class."
 - "It's not OK to say 'That's so gay.'"
 - "What did you mean by that?"
 - "Do you know what 'gay' means?"
 - "You may not have meant to be hurtful, but when you use the word 'gay' to mean something is bad or stupid, it is hurtful."
 - "Do you know why it is hurtful?"

EDUCATE

- If you have been hearing the phrase "That's so gay" used to mean that something is bad or stupid, take the time during a class meeting or group time to make sure that your students know what "gay" means.
- A simple definition could be – the word gay describes a man and a man or a woman and a woman, who love each other and become family to each other.
- Be clear with students that when they use the word "gay" in a negative way they are being disrespectful. Be clear that using the phrase "That's so gay" is hurtful to other students who may have parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, neighbors, friends or other family members who are gay.

BE PROACTIVE

- Build a community of respect and caring for all students in your class and school.
- Establish clear school-wide and classroom policies against name-calling and hurtful teasing.
- Be explicit that rules against name-calling include "That's so gay" and other anti-gay put-downs.
- In lessons on respect, stereotypes or prejudice include information about discrimination against gay, lesbian, and transgender people. Use materials inclusive of LGBT people.

DON'T IGNORE IT

- Ignoring name-calling and hurtful teasing allows it to continue and possibly get worse. If other students do not see action, they get the message that there is nothing wrong with it.
- Harassment does not go away on its own.

DON'T BE AFRAID OF MAKING THE SITUATION WORSE

- Almost any response is better than ignoring the situation. You may not know exactly what to say, but you must stop the harassment.
- Taking action reaffirms limits.
- Interrupting name-calling isn't always easy. With experience you will become more comfortable in handling it.

DON'T EXCUSE THE BEHAVIOR

- Saying "Josh doesn't really know what it means," or "Sarah was only joking," excuses hurtful behavior.

DON'T TRY TO JUDGE HOW UPSET THE TARGET IS:

- We have no way of knowing how a student is really feeling. Often, students who are targeted are embarrassed and pretend that they were not offended or hurt.
- Saying "Pablo didn't seem upset by Aisha's remark" trivializes the child's feelings. It tells the harasser that it is OK to make hurtful comments. It teaches not only the child targeted but also anyone in hearing range that they will not be protected from harassment.

DON'T BE IMMOBILIZED BY FEAR

- Making a mistake is far less serious than not acting at all. You can always go back to the student and say or do something else if you feel you did not respond well.





Welcoming Schools

BOOKS TO ENGAGE ELEMENTARY STUDENTS ON BULLYING AND DIVERSITY

Guidelines for Choosing Books for Students That Deal with Bullying

- Look for good literature with interesting illustrations, rather than dry books without real storylines that try to show students how to handle bullying behavior.
- If you are using a number of books, include ones that portray both boys and girls in the various roles of students who bully, are targeted, remain bystanders and act as allies.
- Use books that show verbal and relational bullying in addition to physical bullying. Avoid showing only girls doing verbal bullying and showing only boys doing physical bullying.
- Look for books where peers or adults take active roles in stopping and preventing bullying.
- Avoid using books that only show the targeted student as responsible for stopping the bullying.
- Look for books that help students see the variety of ways they can be an ally in bullying situations, including talking with or befriending the targeted student, confiding in an adult, talking with the student who is being mean, causing a distraction, or speaking up in the moment.
- Although magical solutions are fun, they don't help students figure out how to handle bullying.
- Avoid books that show kids "getting back" at a student who bullies through tricks or other methods. Those solutions may feel satisfying, but in real life this may escalate the bullying.
- Since bullying often involves power imbalances, books that show the student who is bullying and the student who is targeted becoming friends may be unrealistic.

Picture Books

Benjamin and the Word / Benjamin y La Palabra, Daniel Olivas. (K – 2). Benjamin beat his friend James while playing handball, and James retaliated by calling Benjamin "the word." Bilingual.

Confessions of a Former Bully, Trudy Ludwig. (2 – 5). Told from the unusual point of view of someone who bullied other students. Provides kids with real life tools they can use to identify and stop relational aggression. Mentions a child being taunted for being perceived as gay.

Each Kindness, Jacqueline Woodson. (1 – 3). Every time Maya tries to join Chloe and her friends, they reject her. Eventually she stops coming to school. When Chloe's teacher gives a lesson about how even small acts of kindness can change the world, Chloe is stung by the lost opportunity for friendship.

The Hundred Dresses, Eleanor Estes. (3 – 5). Although she says she has 100 dresses, Wanda wears the same old worn dress. Looks at the effects of being teased, and the feelings of tormentors and bystanders.

Just Kidding* or *Sólo Bromeando, Trudy Ludwig. (1 – 3). D.J. progresses from feeling helpless to taking positive action, undermining the power of two seemingly harmless words. Bilingual.

Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match / Marisol McDonald No Combina, Monica Brown. (K – 2). Marisol, a multiracial girl, loves to be creative, eating peanut butter and jelly burritos, for example. But at times she is misunderstood and teased by peers. Bilingual.

Muskrat Will Be Swimming, Cheryl Savageau. (2 – 4). A Native American girl's feelings are hurt when classmates make fun of the children who live at the lake, but then her grampa tells her a Seneca folktale that reminds her how much she appreciates her home and her place in the world.

My Name Is Bilal, Asma Mobin-Uddin & Barbara Kiwak. (3 – 5). A brother and sister are the only Muslim students at their school. When the sister is teased for wearing a headscarf, Bilal finds the courage to stand up for her.

My Princess Boy, Cheryl Kilodavis. (Pre-K-1) Dyson loves pink, sparkly things. Sometimes he wears dresses, sometimes jeans. He likes to wear a tiara, even when climbing trees. He's a Princess Boy.

The New Girl ... and Me, Jacqui Robbins. (K – 2). Mia is intrigued by the new girl, Shakeeta, but shyness holds her back. When a bully bars them both from playing soccer, the pair strike up a conversation and become friends.

One, Kathryn Otoshi. (Pre-K – 1). Red picks on Blue. The other colors don't know what to do until One shows them how to stand up, stand together, and count.

Pinky and Rex and the Bully, James Howe. (K – 3). Pinky learns the importance of identity as he defends his favorite color, pink, and his friendship with a girl, Rex, from the neighborhood bully.

Say Something, Peggy Moss. (K – 2). A child who never says anything when other children are being teased or bullied finds herself in their position one day when jokes are made at her expense and no one speaks up.

The Sissy Duckling, Harvey Fierstein. (1 – 2). While other boys like to play baseball, Elmer wants to put on the halftime show. But when his father is wounded by a hunter, Elmer proves that the biggest sissy can also be a hero.

The Sneetches and Other Stories, Dr. Seuss. (Pre-K – 3). The Sneetches are bamboozled by Sylvester McMonkey McBean, who teaches them that pointless prejudice can be costly.

Teammates, Peter Golenbock. (1 – 3). The moving story of how Jackie Robinson became the first black player on a major league baseball team and how, on a fateful day, PeeWee Reese took a stand and declared Jackie his teammate.

Thank You, Mr. Falker / Gracias, Sr. Falker, Patricia Polacco. (1 – 3). Fifth-grader Trisha can't read, and a bully who ridicules her magnifies her shame, until a new teacher helps Trisha understand and overcome her problem. English and Spanish editions.

Wings, Christopher Myers. (1 – 5). Take flight with Ikarus Jackson, the boy with wings who remains true to his dreams despite taunts. One girl realizes he must be lonely and resolves to stop the hurtful words.

Chapter Books

The Liberation of Gabriel King, K. L. Going. (4 – 5). In Georgia in 1976, Gabriel, a white boy, and Frita, an African American girl, overcome their fears of bullying and prejudice together as they enter 5th grade.

Playground: A Mostly True Story of a Former Bully, Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson, Laura Moser. (6 – 9) Looks at bullying from the perspective of an urban young teen boy in middle school. Looks at the boy's feelings as both a target of bullying and as a perpetrator of bullying. Touches on divorce and gay parenting. Some explicit language.

The Popularity Papers: Book Two: The Long-Distance Dispatch Between Lydia Goldblatt and Julie Graham-Chang, Amy Ignatow. (4 – 6). Julie and Lydia are in different schools, each dealing with what it means to be popular and with bullying. Notebook/graphic format.

The Revealers, Doug Wilhelm. (5 – 7). Three bullied seventh graders start an unofficial e-mail forum to publicize their experiences. Unexpectedly, many others come forward to confess their similar troubles.

Wonder / La Lección de August, R.J. Palacio. (5 – 7). Auggie was born with a facial deformity that prevented him from going to a mainstream school until 5th grade. Told from multiple perspectives that highlight different struggles with empathy and acceptance. English and Spanish editions.

See ***Welcoming Schools*** for more bibliographies to engage students on bias based bullying, gender, diverse families and LGBT topics.

Guidelines based on recommendations in "Selected Bibliography about Teasing and Bullying for Grades K – 8: Revised and Expanded Edition," Nancy Mullin-Rindler. Wellesley Centers: Center for Research on Women, 2003.



ICE BREAKER: A REFLECTION ON EXPERIENCES WITH BULLYING

LEVEL: Educators or Parents/Guardians **LENGTH OF TIME:** 10 minutes

- Think back to when you were in school and reflect (without sharing with others) whether you were involved in any bullying incidents, either as someone who was targeted, as someone who did some bullying, or as a bystander. (Generally, at least 90% will raise their hands.)
- Leave your hands up if you told an adult. (The majority of hands will go down.)
- Leave your hands up if adults intervened in a way that was useful. (Generally, only 1 or 2 hands will remain up.)
- Ask some of those people to share what adults did that was useful.
- If you feel comfortable, ask how many of the bullying situations had to do with someone's identity, for example their race or skin color, gender, social class, sexual orientation, or ability?
- Ask if anyone is comfortable sharing examples. (Only ask for these examples if you have time to engage in a conversation about the examples that might come up. This may bring up experiences that are still painful and those feelings will need to be acknowledged.)
- Finish up with: What does this mean that we didn't have adults that intervened? Alternately: What's the message or messages that stand out to you from doing this activity?

Most of us know how harmful bullying is, but most of us have not seen good modeling for intervening so it is not surprising that this is challenging. Also, much of the unhelpful advice was based on beliefs that are not helpful, such as “Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me.” We all want to intervene in a way that will be helpful for students. Sometimes that means practicing new strategies and unlearning old messages. This is why it is so important to have these conversations and listen to what students tell us.

According to 5th graders included in a study of over 13,000 students in grades 5-12:

Adult actions that make things better are:

- listening, giving advice and encouragement,
- checking in over time to see if things got better,
- increasing adult supervision,
- and disciplining the student who was mean.

Adult actions that make things worse are:

- telling them to stop tattling,
- telling them to solve it themselves,
- telling the student that they should have acted differently,
- and ignoring the situation.

Charisse Nixon and Stan Davis (2010) The Youth Voice Research Project.

Credit: Melody Brazo, Anti-bias Educator.



PRACTICING RESPONSES TO STUDENTS WITH SCENARIOS FROM *WHAT CAN WE DO? BIAS, BULLYING, AND BYSTANDERS*

In this film, students talked about situations that may be challenging to respond to as educators. Take some time to consider which scenarios from the film would be most challenging for you.

Below are a few that you can use for practice. If there are others that you noticed in the film, practice with those as well.

Remember, there is never just one right way to respond to any situation. So, as you try on a variety of responses, consider the following:

- What is my goal in responding to a comment?
- How might my response affect those who are directly involved and those who may be on the periphery of the conversation?
- What information would help me address a situation that stretches my comfort zone?

Scenarios

- ❖ “He said if you touch the floor it will turn you gay.”
How would you handle this? Is there a way to make clear that a person being gay is not a problem, but using the word “gay” as a putdown is not OK.
- ❖ “He called him chocolate balls.”
*How might you respond to this and other slurs based on skin color?
What do you think about the teacher sharing her own experience in her response? In what kinds of scenarios might you share some of your own experiences?*
- ❖ “Adults can just make it worse...”
*Why do you think students think this sometimes?
What can you and all adults do to offer support, be available, and not make it worse when children tell us something is going on?*
- ❖ In response to a comment about race one student states he “would not do anything” because he might “start something himself.”
What might you say to a child who responds in this way?



MAKING DECISIONS – ALLY OR BYSTANDER: SHORT ACTIVITY

LEVEL: Educators or Parents/Guardians

LENGTH OF TIME: 10-15 minutes

The *Making Decisions: Ally or Bystander* classroom lesson explores with students what they may do when they witness name-calling, bullying or harassment of a friend or someone they don't know. They'll soon see that different situations call for different responses.

During a professional development training or an evening gathering of parents/guardians, this lesson can be adapted as a short activity to get participants thinking concretely about actions that bystanders can take and all the thoughts that quickly go through one's mind as they decide what to do in the moment. It can also get people to see how difficult it is to speak up when they witness bullying and can lay the groundwork for realizing that practicing responses would be a good idea.

MATERIALS

The lesson plan, *Making Decisions: Ally or Bystander*, "4 Corners" placards (included in lesson) posted in four corners of the room, room arrangement suitable for activity and movement. In a professional development session – a copy of the lesson for each participant.

BEFORE THE ACTIVITY

- Review the list of scenarios and pick out ones that you think will generate discussion or that you would like people to consider – gender, race, ability... Include some that are only slight variations so that people have to think about how things would be different if the scenario involves friends or not, students who are older or younger, students who are more popular or not. Include different topics in your set of questions. Depending on the amount of time you have, choose 2-3 scenarios geared towards students and 2-3 geared towards adults.
- Print or write out and post the "4 corner" placards in the area of the room where you will do the activity. People need to be able to move around to each "corner".

INTRODUCE THE ACTIVITY

- Explain that this activity looks at situations where you must decide, in the moment, how to react if you see someone being teased or bullied. Sometimes you may do something. Sometimes you may not. It often depends on the situation, how well you know someone, if they are older or younger, etc.
- Point out the four possibilities:
 - Ignore the situation or walk away.
 - Attempt to negotiate or stop the situation.
 - Talk to the person privately later.
 - Seek assistance from an adult or someone older.

-
- As you begin, ask participants to either think about how they would respond if they were a student in the 4th or 5th grade – either one they know or how they would have responded when they were that age.
 - Read out loud a scenario that you have chosen to use. Make sure people are clear about the scenario, especially if it is a variation of one you just read. Ask them first to think which of the four corners they would go to. Then, have them move. You could point out that asking students to think, before they move, keeps students from just following the crowd.
 - With each scenario, invite a couple of people from the different corners to say why they chose to stand in a certain corner. If they moved to the tell an adult corner, ask them if they would know how to handle the situation now, if a student asked for their help.
 - When the lesson is done in a classroom, having them turn and talk before the sharing is a way to ensure more students are engaged in talking and therefore thinking about their actions.
 - Often a participant will bring up a scenario they have encountered in their school, as an adult. This is a good time to transition to these kinds of scenarios. Having participants think about what they themselves would do in a scenario, helps give them perspective on what we are asking students to do.
 - If no one has brought it up, after you have completed a few scenarios with participants thinking as students, switch to having them be themselves.
 - Ask, “What are situations that you run in to at school, as an adult, where you have to make a decision on what to do?” You could ask people to think about ones about gender or race or families depending on what you are focusing on in the training. It is good to get ideas for scenarios from the participants or you could use ideas from the list below.
 - Do a few rounds with scenarios that may occur for an adult in the school.
 - In these scenarios, the corner that says “seek assistance from an adult” could mean talking with the principal, another colleague, or another parent to figure out what steps they could take.

SAMPLE SCENARIOS FOR EDUCATORS OR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

ADULT → ADULT

1. You are talking with a group of colleagues and one comments about a boy with two moms, “Daniel just keeps acting out. He really needs a father figure at home.”
2. A colleague or parent comments, “It’s no wonder he gets bullied, he wears pink nail polish to school.”
3. A colleague says, “No wonder she’s not doing well in school. Just look at her family.”
4. A parent comments, “Roberto is always playing with the girls, his parents should sign him up for football so he does more things with boys.”

Adult → Student

1. You overhear a group of students talking and one says, “Oh, that assignment was so gay.”
2. A child says, “Ask Xiao Ming for the answer, all Asians are good at math.”
3. You overhear your child say something bad about another child because of their skin color.
4. You overhear another child say something bad about a child because of their skin color.
5. You overhear your child say something bad about another child because of their religion.
6. You overhear a child say something bad about another child because of their religion.

Student → Student (From the lesson plan)

1. A classmate or friend constantly makes fun of a another student because they are small for their age.
2. An older student makes fun of a younger student because they are small for their age
3. When you are with a group of friends, one of them makes fun of a younger student because of the way they dress.
4. A new kid at school calls your friend a bad name because of their skin color.
5. A friend of yours calls a new kid at school a bad name because of their skin color.
6. A kid you don't know calls another kid you don't know a bad name because of their skin color.
7. Someone in your class says something mean to another student in your school because of their religion.
8. A new kid at school calls your friend “gay”
9. A group of students your age keeps saying, “That’s gay” to mean they don’t like something.
10. A group of students your age keeps saying, “That’s gay” to mean they don’t like something and you know that your friend’s dads are gay.
11. A friend of yours keeps saying to other boys, “Hey stop acting like a girl.”
12. A boy in your school that you don’t know very well keeps saying to other boys, “Hey stop acting like a girl.”
13. A friend in your class teases a younger boy for having a teddy bear or a doll.
14. A student in your class teases a boy for wearing a pink T-shirt and nail polish.
15. A girl in your class teases another girl for always dressing like a boy.

Include any others that might apply to your school or community.



BULLYING FACTS – READ AROUNDS: A QUICK WAY TO LOOK AT RESEARCH

SUGGESTED LEVEL: Educators or Parents/Guardians

LENGTH OF TIME: 10 minutes

This activity is a way of presenting research data more interactively. Choose a set of statistics that seem most relevant to the needs of the group and the focus of your presentation. The data could show that teasing, bullying and exclusion based on bias are prevalent in schools and have a negative impact on students.

ACTIVITY

Choose one of these methods to present the information:

- **PowerPoint activity:** Have a few key statistics on your PowerPoint presentation and have people read them from the screen.
- **Cards or slips of paper with information:** Pass around cards or slips of paper with key statistics to some or all of the group members. Go around the room asking people to read out the information from their card or paper. If someone doesn't want to read, have them pass their card/paper on to someone else.
- **Handout activity:** Give each person a sheet with key statistics that they can read to themselves for a couple of minutes.

Ask them if there were any statistics which surprised them or about which they have questions.

Allow a few minutes for discussion.

BULLYING AFFECTS MOST STUDENTS.

When asked if they had been bullied in the past month, about 30% of elementary school students say, “Yes.” But, if asked if someone has repeatedly tried to hurt them or make them feel bad by name-calling, pushing/shoving, spreading rumors/lies or other specific actions about 70% of the children say, “Yes.”

Anne Sawyer et al. (2007). *Journal of Adolescent Health*.

Elementary school staff often underestimate the number of students involved in frequent bullying. While the majority of the school staff estimated that less than 10% of their students were bullied in the past month, over 30% of the students actually said they were frequently bullied.

Catherine Bradshaw et al. (2007). *School Psychology Review*.

Students who are bullied most often tell a parent or a friend. They are less likely to tell a teacher or another adult at school.

Virginia Youth Violence Project (2008) School of Education, University of Virginia.

Over 30% of students who are bullied report that it happens in the classroom.

Jill Devoe and Christina Murphy (2011) U.S. Department of Justice.

Elementary school girls who identify as African-American or Hispanic report higher levels of mean behaviors if they are asked specifically about name-calling, mean teasing or rumors, than if they are only asked if they have been bullied.

Anne Sawyer et al. (2007) *Journal of Adolescent Health*.

In up to 85% of bullying episodes at school, there are other students witnessing or joining in.

Wendy Craig and Debra Pepler (1998) *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL CLIMATE ARE LINKED.

Students who experience acceptance at school are more highly motivated, engaged in learning and committed to school.

Karin Osterman (2000) *Review of Educational Research*.

When students report a more severe bullying climate, school-wide passing rates on standardized tests are up to 5% lower.

Virginia High School Safety Study, 2008.

Both children who are targeted and children who exhibit bullying behavior have lower academic achievement in school.

Joseph A. Drake et al. (2003) *Journal of School Health*.

On average, about 6% of students skipped school at least once during the past 30 days because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to and from school. The average ranges from 1 in 25 for white boys to almost 1 in 10 for Hispanic girls.

Center for Disease Control Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance, 2011.

BULLYING HAS SERIOUS PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH CONSEQUENCES.

Both students who bully and students who are targeted are at a higher risk for suicide than students who are not involved in bullying.

Suicide Prevention Resource Center (2011) *Suicide and Bullying: Issue Brief*.

Children who are bullied fare worse on an extensive list of measures: anxiety, loneliness, low self-esteem, poor social self-competence, depression, psychosomatic symptoms, social withdrawal, school refusal, school absenteeism, poor academic performance, physical health complaints, running away from home, alcohol and drug use, and suicide.

Patricia McDougall et al. *Bullying Special Edition, Education.com*.

BULLYING IS LINKED TO HURTFUL BIAS.

Over 75% of students who are harassed are targeted because of their identity including race, national origin, gender, actual or perceived sexual orientation, religion or ability.

California Healthy Kids Survey, Student Well-being in California, 2009-11: Statewide Results.

Multiple studies indicate that students with disabilities and those who are perceived to be LGBT are most likely to experience bullying.

Bonnie Carter and Vicki Spencer (2006) *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*.

Elementary students who are significantly overweight are up to 63% more likely to be bullied than other children.

Julie Lumeng et al. (2010) *Pediatrics*.

Nearly one-third of middle school students have been the object of sexual jokes, comments or gestures.

California Healthy Kids Survey, Student Well-being in California, 2009-11: Statewide Results.

In the 28 random shootings in U.S. schools between 1982 and 2001, nearly all the boys who committed the violence had stories of being constantly bullied, teased and “gay-baited” — not because they were gay, but because they were different from the other boys: shy, artistic, theatrical, musical, non-athletic or “geekish.”

Michael Kimmel and Matthew Mahler (2003) *American Behavioral Scientist*.

BIAS BASED BULLYING HURTS MORE.

Compared with students harassed for other reasons, students who feel harassed for their race, religion, ability, perceived sexual orientation, or gender:

- **have higher rates of depression and drug use;**
- **are up to twice as likely to have thought about or attempted suicide;**
- **are more likely to have lower grades and skip school;**
- **are twice as likely to have their personal belongings stolen or deliberately damaged at school;**
- **and are up to 4 times as likely to have been threatened with a weapon at school.**

Stephen Russell et al. (2012) *American Journal of Public Health*.

5th – 8th grade students who report higher levels of gender or racial daily hassles also report greater emotional and behavioral problems, as well as lower self-esteem.

David DuBois et al. (2002) *Child Development*.

In a nationwide survey, children said they feared anti-gay harassment more than any other kind of name-calling.

Joseph Drake et al. (2003) *Journal of School Health*.

Students targeted with anti-gay putdowns are more likely to report higher levels of depression and anxiety, and a lower sense of school belonging regardless of their sexual orientation.

V. Paul Poteat and Dorothy L. Espelage (2007) *The Journal of Early Adolescence*.

BULLYING CAN BE STOPPED.

Observations at urban elementary schools revealed that when bystanders intervened, they were often effective. 57% of the interventions stopped the bullying within 10 seconds.

D. Lynn Hawkins et al. (2001). *Social Development*.

Student and adults who perceive that others in their school would jump in to stop bullying are more likely to intervene when they witnessing bullying.

Frances Aboud and Anna Joong (2008). Catherine Bradshaw et al (2011) National Education Association.

The most effective strategies to stop bullying involve the whole school working together to change the school climate and norms of behavior. Based on research, key strategies include:

- **establishing school wide rules and consequences for bullying,**
- **educator training,**
- **parent engagement,**
- **classroom management,**
- **playground supervision,**
- **and cooperative group work.**

Maria Ttofi and David Farrington (2011) *Journal of Experimental Criminology*.



TERMINOLOGY: SOME NOTES ON LANGUAGE ABOUT BIAS AND BULLYING

A Note on the Use of the Words Bully and Victim

Bully: Because bullying is a behavior and not a permanent characteristic of a student, it is important to avoid using terms like bully for youth who engage in bullying behavior. If you or the student believes that being a bully is just a part of who they are, it is harder to change.

By understanding bullying as a behavior, you can use behavior management techniques to develop more positive, pro-social behavior. It is better to use language such as students who bully or students who engage in bullying behavior.

Victim: Viewing a student as a victim can suggest that there is something inherent about that child that makes them a natural target for bullying behaviors. It is better to use language such as “students who are targeted” or “students who are hurt by bullying.”

A Few Definitions

Bullying: The key elements in bullying are aggressive behavior, an imbalance of power and repetition or the potential for repetition. The power imbalance can be either real or perceived. Students who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose. For legal purposes, the definition of bullying varies from state to state.

Harassment: Behavior meant to frighten, taunt or defame someone. Harassment can be physical, verbal, social or emotional in nature. All forms are destructive and have long-term consequences for the person harassed. Under federal civil rights laws, schools can be legally liable for peer harassment when it is based on a protected class (race, national origin, color, sex, age, disability, religion) and it is severe or pervasive enough to create a hostile or abusive school environment; the school knew about the harassment; and the school failed to take appropriate action.

Teasing: Good-natured teasing is friendly in nature and does not lead to physical confrontations or a student feeling hurt or put-down. Good-natured teasing can cross the line to hurtful teasing when it continues even when the person being teased doesn’t like it, there is a power imbalance between the relationship between the people, the intent of the person doing the teasing, and whether sensitive issues are touched on, such as race, socio-economic status, appearance, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

Ally: Someone who speaks out or takes actions on behalf of someone else. Also known as an upstander.

Bystander: Generally, someone who sees something negative happening – bullying, harassment or discrimination – and does not say or do anything. Also, known as a passive bystander.

Upstander: Someone who witnesses a negative action such as bullying, harassment or discrimination and takes some kind of action to stop it. May be called an active bystander.

Anti-bias: A term to describe the active commitment to challenging prejudice, stereotyping and all forms of discrimination.

Anti-bias Education: Working with students to help them understand and affirm their own identities, recognize the diversity of people, be aware of the unfairness of stereotypes and prejudices, and then take action to stand up for others and create a respectful and welcoming community.

Bias: A preference or inclination either for or against something or someone that limits a person's ability to make a fair or objective judgment.

Discrimination: An action or behavior. Different or unfair treatment of people because they belong to particular groups or have specific characteristics.

Prejudice: A feeling or an attitude. Can be negative or positive. Based on incomplete knowledge or stereotypes before knowing more about someone or something.

Stereotype: A generalization, usually oversimplified and negative, about an entire group of people without regard for individual differences. Even positive stereotypes can have a negative impact. Keeps people from being seen as individuals.

Hate Crime: A crime that is motivated by race, religion, sex, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Under federal law and some state and local laws, hate crimes may be investigated by additional law enforcement personnel and can carry additional penalties.

Inclusiveness: A commitment to foster a climate that represents and values members of diverse social identity groups. Inclusive practices occur at the individual, cultural and institutional levels, creating a culture where all members feel they belong, and are welcomed..

Intersectionality: The idea that there is an intersection or multiple layers of bias that people experience because all people are simultaneously members of many groups based on their race, their gender, their age, their social class, etc. For example, because of their genders, boys and girls may experience race differently, or because of their race, individual girls may experience gender expectations differently.

Micro-aggressions: Subtle words, cues and/or behaviors that insult, invalidate, or exclude traditionally marginalized group members. Can be brief and commonplace. Often unconscious or unintentional. In the long-term can have a significant negative effect on one's health.

Some examples of micro-aggressions are; an African-American boy is praised for being articulate (as if that is unexpected); a student with two moms is frequently asked about a father – on school forms, from other kids, or by adults (as if they should have a father); a boy who likes dance or dolls or art is regularly asked, "Why do you like that?" (as if those activities are for girls); or talking loudly or in simpler language to a girl who is blind (as if one disability means lesser abilities in more ways.)



WORDS THAT HURT AND WORDS THAT HEAL

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: K – 4

LENGTH OF TIME: One 45 – 60 minute session.

GOALS

- For students to consider the importance of words and actions.
- For students to see themselves as allies standing up for each other in a caring community.

OBJECTIVES

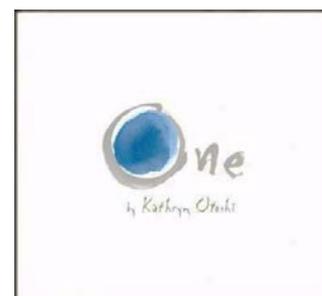
- Students will apply literature to real life experiences.
- Students will share their understanding of the harmful nature of words or actions to make others feel “less than” or unwelcome.
- Students will strategize effective ways to welcome and stand up for someone who has been treated unkindly.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- CCSS: SL 1.2: Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.. Also SL K.2, 2.2, 3.2, 4.2
- CCSS: RL 2.3 Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges. Also RL K.3, 1.3, 3.3, 4.3
- CCSS: RL 1.7 Use illustrations and details in a story to describe its characters, setting, or events. Also RL K.7, 2.7, 3.7, 4.7

EDUCATORS’ NOTES

This lesson illustrates how words or actions can hurt — or heal. After reading the book, *One* by Kathryn Otoshi, the teacher leads students in a discussion of words or actions that have hurt them or other students in your school. Then students discuss what they can do to help each other and stand up for each other. If you don’t have a copy of the book, the activity and discussion can be done as a stand alone lesson.



It is important to caution students not to use people’s names or identify anyone when sharing. The intent is to ensure that students change hurtful practices without bringing attention to individual students who have bullied others or who have been targeted. Special thought and care will need to be taken if certain students are vulnerable due to differences or recent incidences in order to avoid unwanted attention or discomfort for that student. Following up with such students after the activity, in a discreet manner, may be necessary as well.

As the lesson proceeds, try to ensure that the different kinds of name-calling you have heard in your school are mentioned. If you have heard students at your grade level using “gay” as a put-down, raise that as a discussion topic, as students may think it is taboo to mention. If you have heard students being teased or excluded for not meeting cultural norms of femininity or masculinity, raise those points. If you have heard teasing about economic differences, race, or ethnicity, ensure those are brought up.

MATERIALS A large piece of paper cut into the shape of a heart

BOOK *One* by Kathryn Otoshi. (If you don't have a copy, see the modified lesson plan below.)

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Listen to and monitor ways that students or others in the school put each other down or exclude each other. Listen for put-downs related to gender, race, class, family structure or personal appearance. Notice who gets excluded and why.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON TO YOUR CLASS

- Gather students in a group and say, “Today, we are going to talk about and explore our classroom paying attention to how we treat each other—what makes us feel welcome, happy, and important and what makes us feel lonely, sad and unimportant.” Explain that students often have difficulty fitting in because they are in a situation where groups of students have already formed bonds of friendship or because they are different in some way. Point out that some people will automatically put up barriers to another student, deciding quickly that they dislike the student, without even trying to get to know him or her. State, “In our class and school we want everyone to be treated kindly, to belong and to do their very best.”

LESSON INCLUDING READING THE BOOK, *ONE* BY KATHRYN OTOSHI

Before you begin reading:

- Ask your students to pay attention to the colors that are in the book and what the colors mean. Also, ask them to think about the word count. Count refers to two different things in the story—something that matters and numbers.
- As you read, pause to ask the students questions and reflect on the book.
 - After Red says, “Red is hot. Blue is not,” you could ask how they think Blue feels?
 - After Red picked on all of the colors and got bigger and BIGGER, you could ask your students, if they were one of these colors how would they feel at this point?

Crumpling up a heart activity:

- After reading the book, ask your students if they have ever noticed in your school or classroom, people acting like “Red” or people feeling sad or unimportant because of things that were said that might have hurt their feelings.
- Ask them to take a minute to think about these things.
- Say that you have a heart that you are going to crumple up a bit each time someone says one of these things that hurt. The heart represents student's hearts and when something is said to us that feels unkind it makes our hearts hurt.
- To start things off, ask again: have you heard anybody say unkind things or do mean things in our classroom or our school?
- Interact with students as they bring things up. Ask them follow-up questions for clarification or to see how it felt to either hear the unkind words directed at them or to hear the unkind words directed at someone else. Appreciate them if they have said something that may have been difficult.

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- Are there any words that they have heard other students say that are hurtful?
 - Each time another student says something that they've seen or heard that is hurtful, crumple of a part of the heart.
 - After students have had a chance to say a number of things about what has been or could be hurtful and after you have had a chance to interact with students on these experiences, turn to what could make things better.
 - Ask the students, what are some things that they could do to help when they have heard or seen something mean. How would they make someone feel more welcomed again? How would they help stop the hurtful teasing or bullying?
 - Say that each time someone comes up with an idea you will smooth out the heart a little while they are talking.
 - If somebody was being mean to you and making you feel unimportant, what would you hope someone would do?

Optional: Mini role-play with the students:

- After students have had a chance to name ways that they could help a person who is being teased or bullied, have students think about the end of the book.
- Ask: who was it that stood up to red? What did One do to let Red know that picking on the other colors was not okay behavior? (Answer: He stood up straight and tall like an arrow. If students don't come up with that answer, prompt them or turn back to that page in the book to remind them.)
- What number do you think you would be in the book? (Someone will probably say the number one.)
- Ask who else would want to be number one? Raise your hand. Who would want to be number two? How about number three or four?
- If you raised your hand, stand up.
- Look at all the people standing up. If all of these people stood straight up like an arrow and said, "No." (Have kids say, "No.") Do you think it would help stop someone from getting teased or hurt?
- How do you think it would feel to see people standing up for you if you were the one being teased or hurt?
- What would you think if you saw someone else standing up for someone?

Going back to the book:

- After One stood up and said, "This is not okay" and the other colors did the same, did you notice how that word count was used? The book says, "Blue saw the colors change. He wanted to count." What does Blue mean? Discuss how it feels good to count.
- At the very end of the book red blew a fuse and then got smaller and smaller and smaller. Did red disappear? Did you notice, what happened to red at the end? He turned another color,

right. And then it says, “Then red laughed and joined the fun.” What do you think about that ending? Were the colors just standing up to red and saying, “Stop it. Go away. We don’t want to see you ever again” or were the other colors saying, “Hey, you stop. You don’t have to be mean. We know you can be nice”? Even though somebody is mean to us they can still be nice if we help them and they listen.

Going back to the heart:

- Ask: Why did I crumple up the heart? Why did I smooth it out? What do you notice about the heart? Does it look the same as when I started? How is it different?
- This is the same as when somebody is bullied. If someone is bullied and told they’re not important, and *even if* someone says, “I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to do that,” the person’s heart can never be the same.
- Discuss how this is true for anyone who is targeted —called names or bullied for being different. So that’s why it is important to not be mean to other people and to help to be a kind and welcoming person.

LESSON PLAN WITHOUT READING THE BOOK

- Ask students to think for a minute about ways they have heard kids tease others, or words that they have heard kids use to put someone down that made them feel lonely or unhappy. Our words and actions are important and have outcomes. Ask, “Have you ever felt that you hurt in your heart when you hear or witness sadness?” (Educator might give personal example.) Our words and actions matter. In this activity we’ll show that discomfort or sadness by crumpling a paper heart when we share a hurtful word or experience. Invite students to share the kinds of teasing, hurtful acts, or bad words that they have heard at your school. Each time a mean thing is said, scrunch up a piece of the heart to make it wrinkly.
- After everyone has had a chance to share, ask the students how they think they would feel after hearing these kinds of words. Would they want to come to school? Would they feel like doing their best work? Do hurtful words and actions help each other?
- Ask the students some ways that they could help each other feel better. What could they do to help each other feel included and do their best? A variety of ways to reach out to a peer should be discussed. Examples might be inviting the child to play ball or draw together or sit together at lunch.
- Say that each time someone comes up with an idea you will smooth out the heart a little while they are talking. Even when the paper heart is as flat as you can get it, the heart will not look the same as before it was crumpled.
- Ask questions to lead students to the understanding that, although some of the damage has been repaired, when we hurt someone, they will never be exactly the same; when your heart or feelings are deeply hurt, the scars remain, just like the wrinkles remain. Chances are those scars will never go away. Discuss how this is true for any people who are targeted—called names or bullied for being different.

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- Ask the children to name reasons or differences for which children are excluded, teased or bullied.
 - Ask the children if they know anyone whose feelings have ever been hurt in this way and invite them to share about it. This invites children to speak about things that may have happened to them or their family members but does not put them on the spot or force them to identify themselves as a target.

Going back to the heart:

- Ask: Why did I crumple up the heart? Why did I smooth it out? What do you notice about the heart? Does it look the same as when I started? How is it different?
- This is the same as when somebody is bullied. If someone is bullied and told they're not important, and *even if* someone says, "I'm sorry, I didn't mean to do that," the person's heart can never be the same.
- Discuss how this is true for any people who are targeted —called names or bullied for being different. So that's why it is important to not be mean to other people and to be a kind and welcoming person.

EXTENSIONS

- Post the heart on a wall as a reminder of the power that words can have to hurt and heal. The heart will serve as constant reinforcement of a vivid lesson in kindness.
- Have students write a letter to their family about words and actions that heal activity and suggest thoughtful actions that they will use at school and at home.
- Encourage students to practice kind words and actions and record on the classroom heart.
- Include words like ally, bystander and upstander on a word wall.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Work with your students to create a list of guidelines for making the classroom feel safe and affirming for everyone. Ask them to say what they think the goals should be in order to be a welcoming community where everyone feels safe and like they belong. Ask them to think of ways they can all participate in making these guidelines work and create strategies for intervening, requesting the assistance of an adult or joining with others to make someone feel better, safer and more welcome. Educators will monitor and encourage engagement and empathy.

SUGGESTED BOOKS FOR STUDENTS

Benjamin and the Word / Benjamin y la palabra, Daniel Olivas.

Confessions of a Former Bully, Trudy Ludwig.

Each Kindness, Jacqueline Woodson.

Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match / Marisol McDonald no combina, Monica Brown.

Muskrat Will Be Swimming, Cheryl Savageau.

Pinky and Rex and the Bully, James Howe.

Say Something, Peggy Moss.

Teammates, Peter Golenbock.

Wings, Christopher A. Myers.

Adapted by Rhonda Thomason, M.A. NBCT from a lesson by Gary Hopkins, Education World, and Kevin Gogin, San Francisco Unified School District.



NAME-CALLING AND FEELING SAFE IN SCHOOL

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 1 – 4

LENGTH OF TIME: Two 30-minute sessions or one one-hour session.

GOAL

- To help students begin to take responsibility for creating emotional safety in school.
- To help students identify places in the school where they feel safe or unsafe.

OBJECTIVES

- The students will discuss and consider ways to make their school safer.
- The students will identify areas of the school that feel unsafe and where name-calling occurs.
- The students will list and discuss put-downs and how it feels to be put down because of name-calling.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- CCSS SL 4.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. Also SL 1.1, 2.1, 3.1
- Social Studies Strand 4: Individual Development and Identity – Exploration, identification, and analysis of how individuals and groups are alike and how they are unique, as well as how they relate to each other in supportive and collaborative ways.

EDUCATORS' NOTES

Spend a few days listening for the kinds of name-calling that take place in the classroom, at recess, in the hallways, in the gym, etc. By listening ahead of time, you can then make sure all of the different kinds of name-calling you hear are addressed when you do the lesson. Listen for examples of what children might give as reasons for not playing with another student. These reasons might relate to race, gender, family structure, class or physical appearance. If you hear anti-gay name-calling, make sure to include it as students may not bring it up themselves.

MATERIALS: Chart paper, markers, pencils, paper or note cards.

ACTIVITIES, PART 1) IDENTIFYING SAFE AND UNSAFE AREAS IN THE SCHOOL

INTRODUCTION

- Introduce the idea that you want to find out where in the school students feel safe or comfortable and places where they do not feel safe or places where they feel less comfortable or uneasy.
- It is important to acknowledge that students will have different feelings about the same spaces.
- Discuss what makes students feel safe and unsafe at school. You could do a quick brainstorm on chart paper or a white board.
- Remind students that there are different ways to feel safe – physically and emotionally. Make sure that they understand that you are also talking about the emotional ways people feel safe.

IDENTIFYING WHERE STUDENTS FEEL SAFE OR UNSAFE

- With your students, brainstorm a list on chart paper of all the places in the school that students go to or walk through. Make sure all of the different places in the school are included, such as hallways, stairwells, bathrooms, classrooms, learning centers, cafeterias, different parts of the playground, the nurse’s office, the principal’s office, etc. Also include walking to school, on the bus and at the bus stops.
- After the places are identified, give your students a minute to look over the list and pick two to three places where they feel safe. Also, ask them to pick two to three places where they feel less safe or where they have heard name-calling, hurtful teasing or seen bullying. Tell them there may also be places where they feel safe sometimes and not others. Have them pick two to three of those as well.
- While your students are reviewing the list, add three columns to the chart: “Safe,” “Unsafe” and “Sometimes Safe/Unsafe.”
- Allow the students to go up to the chart and make tally marks in the appropriate columns.

MODIFICATIONS

- All students may not feel comfortable placing the tally marks in front of the whole class. If you suspect this is the case, have students write on paper or note cards where they feel safe, unsafe and sometimes safe/unsafe. Then you can make the tally marks on the chart.
- Another alternative is to do this exercise in small, self-selected groups that report back to the whole group and complete the chart.

PLACES IN THE SCHOOL, AROUND THE SCHOOL, ON THE WAY TO SCHOOL	FEEL SAFE	FEEL UNSAFE	SOMETIMES SAFE / SOMETIMES UNSAFE

DISCUSSION

After the chart is finished, ask your students the following questions:

- Which areas of the school have the most “Safe” tally marks?
- Which areas have the most “Unsafe” tally marks?
- What makes you or others feel safe in these areas?
- What might make someone feel less safe in areas?
- What makes a place feel safe sometimes and less safe other times? What is different?

ACTIVITIES, PART 2) LOOKING AT HOW NAME-CALLING MAKES THE SCHOOL FEEL UNSAFE – A BRAINSTORM OF WORDS OR NAMES STUDENTS HEAR

Begin by asking students for words, names or comments they have heard that can make people feel unsafe. Again, pay attention to what students might give as reasons for not playing with another child. These reasons might relate to race, gender, family structure, class or physical appearance. Add any additional names or comments that you have heard or prompt the students to say additional names that you have heard. (For example, if you have heard anti-gay, skin color based, or gender based slurs at your school, make sure to include those words. Students may feel uncomfortable saying these at first but then often feel relieved that someone has actually mentioned them.)

Note: Be careful not to do this in a way that might make one student stand out. For example, if there is only one Latina student in the class and she has been targeted because she speaks with an accent, don't hold this situation up as an example.

Using the chart of the areas of the school, ask students where they hear name-calling.

DISCUSSION

Lead a discussion about name-calling with the following questions as guidelines:

- How does it feel when someone calls you a name?
- How does it make you feel when you hear someone else called a name?
- Why do people call others names?
- Why does the name-calling happen where it does?

ACTION STEPS

Look at what can be done to stop the name-calling and help your school feel safe and welcome for all students. Use some of these questions to prompt the discussion. Make a list on chart paper.

- What can we do about the places where we feel unsafe? How can you help someone who has been called a name?
- What can students do to help stop name-calling and help others feel safe and welcome?
- What can teachers and other adults in the school (administrators, lunch and recess monitors, bus drivers...) do to help stop the name-calling and help students feel safe and welcome?
- **Note:** If it comes to your attention that an area of the school seems particularly unsafe, you or some of your students should report this to the administration along with developing an action plan to make that area safer.

EDUCATORS' NOTES

- If name-calling such as "That's so gay" comes up, ask the students what is meant when they say this or hear this. Find out what the intention was. Explain that "gay" is a word that describes individuals or a group of people. Define the words "gay" or "queer" if students have mentioned them. Explain that when you use that word to mean something is bad or stupid, not only does it hurt the feelings of the student who is taunted with the word "gay," but it hurts the feelings of anyone who is gay or who may have a parent, relative or friend who is gay, because it implies that "gay" is bad.

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- “Tattling” and “reporting”: It is important to create a climate where kids have a common understanding that reporting an incident that is harmful to themselves or others is different from “tattling” on another student for the purpose of getting him/her in trouble — that there is value in each person taking responsibility for making the school feel safe for all people.

MODIFICATIONS

There may be a situation in a class when it is very important for children to maintain anonymity as they answer questions about safety in school. We don’t want to create a situation in which kids will feel like tattle tales. It is possible to create a true/false questionnaire about the safety of areas of the school. Students can hand these in and then you can tally them. Also, doing this exercise in small, self-selected groups might create a level of safety in reporting to and discussing with each other.

EXTENSIONS

- *Literacy*: Have students write about an area of the school in which they feel safe and an area in which they feel unsafe. What could help make the “unsafe” area feel safe?
- *Write a letter to the principal* stating that a particular area feels unsafe with suggestions for actions that can be taken to make it safe. It might be best for small groups to each address one area and write a letter specific to that.
- *Creating a Safer School*: With the class review the list of action steps. Decide on one to three actions that students could take to make your school feel safer. Develop and carry out a plan to implement those actions. This could be done as a whole class or students could work in small groups to plan and carry out one of the actions.
- *Whole School Activity*: Over the course of a week, have many classes in the school use this lesson as a schoolwide evaluation tool to identify the locations where students feel most vulnerable.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Come back to the chart in a few weeks or months and see if there are any changes in the safe and unsafe areas.

SUGGESTED BOOKS FOR STUDENTS

Benjamin and the Word / Benjamin y La Palabra, Daniel Olivas. Bilingual.

Each Kindness, Jacqueline Woodson.

Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match / Marisol McDonald no combina, Monica Brown. Bilingual.

Muskrat Will Be Swimming, Cheryl Savageau.

One, Kathryn Otoshi.

Pinky and Rex and the Bully, James Howe.

Say Something, Peggy Moss.

Teammates, Peter Golenbock,

Thank You, Mr. Falker or *Gracias, Señor Falker*, Patricia Polacco. English and Spanish editions.

Wings, Christopher A. Myers.

Part of this lesson was based on ideas in Where I Feel Safe/Unsafe in: Merle Froschl, Barbara Sprung, and Nancy Mullin-Rindler with Nan Stein and Nancy Gropper. Quit it!: A Teacher’s Guide on Teasing and Bullying for Use with Students in Grades K-3. Educational Equity Concepts, Inc., Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, NEA Professional Library. 1998. www.wcwonline.org



MAKING DECISIONS: ALLY OR BYSTANDER

SUGGESTED GRADE LEVEL: 4 – 6

LENGTH OF TIME: One or two class periods of 45 minutes

GOALS

- For students to explore their own roles in incidences of bullying, harassment and name-calling.
- To explore and practice possible interventions.
- To define what it means to take action/be an ally.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will talk about bullying, harassment and name-calling.
- Students will consider different responses to bullying and how that might change depending on the situation.
- Students will discuss alternatives to ignoring bullying, harassment and name-calling.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- CCSS: SL 4.1, 5.1 and 6.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4/5/6 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- Social Studies Strand 4: Individual Development and Identity – Exploration, identification, and analysis of how individuals and groups are alike and how they are unique, as well as how they relate to each other in supportive and collaborative ways.

EDUCATORS' NOTES

This discussion with students will explore how all of us, at one time or another, have had to make a decision about whether or not we will intervene or take a stand when we witness name-calling, bullying or harassment of a friend or a stranger. Often we make these decisions in the moment, reacting to situations as they come up. In this lesson students take the time to explore many different situations that could be seen at school and think about how they make decisions such as intervening, getting help, participating or walking away.

MATERIALS

"4 Corners" placards (included in lesson) hung in the four corners of the room, *Ally or Bystander: Situation Sheet* (included in lesson), room arrangement suitable for activity and movement, chart paper or whiteboard, markers.

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Review the list of scenarios and pick out ones that you think will generate discussion in your class or that you would like your students to consider. You could also develop your own to cover topics that may be issues in your school. Start with some scenarios that may be easier for your students to consider. Include some that are only slight variations so that students have to

think about how things would be different if the scenario involves friends or not, students who are older or younger, students who are more popular or not. Include different topics in your set of questions. You probably will have time for 6 to 8 scenarios in one class period.

- Print out or write out and post the “4 corner” placards in the area of your classroom where you will do the lesson. Students need to be able to move around to each “corner”.

ACTIVITY

- Explain to the students that this activity looks at situations where you must decide, in that moment, how to react if you see someone being teased or bullied. Sometimes you may do something. Sometimes you may not. It often depends on the situation, how well you know someone, if they are older or younger, etc. This activity involves movement and action.
- For each situation, students will make a decision regarding how they will respond using the following four choices. Briefly discuss each to ensure that your students understand each one.
 - Ignore the situation or walk away.
 - Attempt to negotiate or stop the situation.
 - Talk to the person privately later.
 - Seek assistance from an adult or someone older.
- Read the scenarios that you have chosen, out loud to the class. Make sure your students understand the scenario, especially if it is a variation of one you just read. Ask them first to think for themselves which of the four corners they would go to. Then, have them move to the corner of the room that represents how they would act in response to that particular scenario.
- Before you hear from students, you could have them turn and talk to another person in their group about why they chose to go to that corner.
- With each scenario, invite a couple of students from the different corners to say why they chose to stand in a certain corner. Follow-up on their answers as appropriate. You could ask them to give an example of what they could say to the person being teased or bullied and what they could say to the person doing the hurtful teasing or bullying. Make sure to hear from students in all 4 corners during the lesson. As your students say why they have chosen a particular action/corner, acknowledge their reasoning.
- To generate further discussion after you have presented the scenarios, ask some open-ended questions:
 - Did you respond differently to the different scenarios?
 - What are some of the reasons you chose one corner versus another for different scenarios?
 - With whom did you feel most comfortable intervening?
 - When were you more likely to ignore the situation? Why?
 - Would you respond in some other way not represented by the four corners?
- Discuss what it means to be a bystander.
 - How do you think the person being teased feels if people are listening or watching and don't do anything?
 - How do you feel when you don't do something?

-
- Talk about what it means to be an ally. Using chart paper or a whiteboard, brainstorm ways to be an ally. (If you use chart paper you can keep it hanging on your classroom wall.)
 - Acknowledge that there are many ways to be an ally depending on the situation. The important message is that if students witness bullying behavior, that they take some kind of action. If they are not sure whether to do something, this means it is a good time to talk with someone about it. Ask students to also think about if there are times they feel unsafe being an ally. What could they do in those situations?
 - In closing, ask students to think of how they could be a better ally to the other students in your class or school.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

- Can students define what it means to be an ally or bystander?
- Do you observe students sticking up for each other more?
- Can students identify ways to be an ally?

SUGGESTED BOOKS FOR STUDENTS

Benjamin and the Word / Benjamin y La Palabra, Daniel Olivas.

Crow Boy, Taro Yashima.

Each Kindness, Jacqueline Woodson.

One, Kathryn Otoshi.

Say Something, Peggy Moss.

Teammates, Peter Golenbock,

Wings, Christopher A. Myers.

CHAPTER BOOKS:

The Liberation of Gabriel King, K. L. Going.

No Castles Here, A.C.E. Bauer.

Playground: A Mostly True Story of a Former Bully, Curtis "50 Cent" Jackson, Laura Moser.

The Popularity Papers: Book Two: The Long-Distance Dispatch Between Lydia Goldblatt and Julie Graham-Chang, Amy Ignatow.

The Revealers, Doug Wilhelm.

Wonder, R.J. Palacio.



RELEVANT RESEARCH ON ALLY AND BYSTANDER BEHAVIOR

- According to 5th graders included in a study of over 13,000 students in grades 5-12:¹
 - Peer actions that make things better are:
 - spending time or talking with them at school,
 - helping them get away from the situation,
 - making a distraction,
 - and helping them tell an adult at the school.
 - Peer actions that make things worse are:
 - blaming them for what happened,
 - making fun of them for being teased or for asking for help,
 - and ignoring the situation.
 - Adult actions that make things better are:
 - listening, giving advice and encouragement,
 - checking in over time to see if things got better,
 - increasing adult supervision,
 - and disciplining the student who was mean.
 - Adult actions that make things worse are:
 - telling them to stop tattling,
 - telling them to solve it themselves,
 - telling the student that they should have acted differently,
 - and ignoring the situation.
- A consistent message about intervention and support from adults and administrators helps shift bystander attitudes towards a willingness to intervene in a bullying situation based on analysis of evidence from 11 school-based programs.²
- Perceiving that others in a school are also be likely to intervene correlates with greater comfort intervening in bullying situations for both educators and staff, and students in a school.^{3,4}

¹ Charisse Nixon and Stan Davis (2010). The Youth Voice Research Project. 2010 International Bullying Prevention Association. Seattle, WA.

² Joshua R. Polanin, Dorothy L. Espelage, and Therese D. Pigott (2012). A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Bullying Prevention Programs' Effects on Bystander Intervention Behavior, *School Psychology Review* 41:1.

³ Catherine P. Bradshaw, Tracy Evian Waasdorp, Lindsey M. O'Brennan, Michaela Gulemetova (2011). Findings from the National Education Association's Nationwide Study of Bullying: Teachers' and Education Support Professionals' Perspectives. National Education Association.

⁴ Frances Aboud and Anna Joong (2008). Intergroup name-calling and conditions for creating assertive bystanders. In S. Levy & M. Killen (Eds.), *Intergroup attitudes and relations in childhood through adulthood* (pp. 249-260). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.



ALLY OR BYSTANDER — SITUATION SHEET

This activity takes two 45-minute periods to complete all 15. If you only have 45 minutes to spend on this activity, pick 6-8 situations. Start with an easier one. Use ones with slight variations to make students think about how they might handle each situation differently.

1. A classmate or friend constantly makes fun of a another student because they are small for their age
2. An older student makes fun of a younger student because they are small for their age
3. When you are with a group of friends, one of them makes fun of a younger student because of the way they dress.
4. A new kid at school calls your friend a bad name because of their skin color.
5. A friend of yours calls a new kid at school a bad name because of their skin color.
6. A kid you don't know calls another kid you don't know a bad name because of their skin color.
7. Someone in your class says something mean to another student in your school because of their religion.
8. A new kid at school calls your friend "gay"
9. A group of students your age keeps saying, "That's gay" to mean they don't like something.
10. A group of students your age keeps saying, "That's gay" to mean they don't like something and you know that your friend's dads are gay.
11. A friend of yours keeps saying to other boys, "Hey stop acting like a girl."
12. A boy in your school that you don't know very well keeps saying to other boys, "Hey stop acting like a girl."
13. A friend in your class teases a younger boy for having a teddy bear or a doll.
14. A student in your class teases a boy for wearing a pink T-shirt and nail polish.
15. A girl in your class teases another girl for always dressing like a boy.

Include any others that might apply to your school or community.

**IGNORE THE SITUATION
OR WALK AWAY**

INTERVENE MYSELF

**TALK TO THE PERSON
IN PRIVATE**

**SEEK HELP FROM AN ADULT
OR SOMEONE OLDER**



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**BE WHO
YOU ARE!**

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WHAT CAN WE DO? DISCUSSION GUIDE AND HANDOUT REFERENCES

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