

Bystanders count

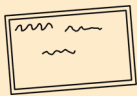
Objective:

Bullying situations usually also involve bystanders – those who watch bullying happen or hear about it. Bystanders rarely play a completely neutral role. Depending on how bystanders respond, they can either contribute to the problem or the solution.

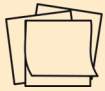
This activity will help students understand that as a bystander they have the power to play a key role in preventing or stopping bullying.



Materials:



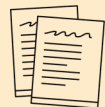
Flip-chart paper or whiteboard



Post-It notes



Pens



Scenarios
(see page 3)



Response cards
(see page 4)

Method:

Work in small groups or as a whole class.

- Remind students of the definition of bullying:

Bullying is when someone uses 'power' they have over you to try to hurt or upset you again and again.

Activity A: What is a bystander?

- Ask students to think of other words to describe a bystander.

Examples are witness, onlooker, observer, passer-by, spectator, eye-witness.



Activity B: Would you support the bullied person?

- Split your students into small groups. Provide each group with a scenario (see over page) illustrating a bullying incident.
- Ask the groups to consider reasons why they would not support the person being bullied in the scenario and write these on post-it notes. These should be placed on flip-chart paper or a whiteboard under the heading 'No Support'.
- Discuss the reasons students have given as to why they would not support the person being bullied.
- Next, ask the groups to consider reasons why they should intervene. Ask them to write these on post-it notes and put them under a heading 'Support'.
- Discuss the reasons the students have given for supporting the person being bullied.

Activity C: What could you do?

This activity is to give students some responses they could use to stop a person being bullied.

- In small groups ask the students to order the 10 statements provided (see page 4), based on their likely effectiveness.
- Facilitate a discussion on why the groups have decided that some strategies may be more effective than others.
- Discuss with students that bullying research¹ shows 85% of bullying takes place with bystanders present and that the reasons students said they found it difficult to intervene were:
 - They think, "It's none of my business".
 - They fear getting hurt or becoming another target.
 - They feel powerless to stop the person bullying.
 - They don't like the target, or believe the target 'deserves' it.
 - They think that telling adults won't help or it may make things worse.
 - They don't know what to do.
- Bystanders can have a powerful effect on either encouraging or preventing bullying behaviour. There are four main types of bystander: followers, supporters, defenders and outsiders.



¹Craig, W. M. & Pepler, D. (1997). Observations of bullying and victimization in the school yard. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, 13(2): 41–60.

Scenarios:

Jack and Tom

Jack is one of the excellent students in your class. Other students ask him for his homework so they can copy it, but he always refuses. Jack has asthma and this makes it difficult for him to participate in sporting activities. Recently you saw Jack have an asthma attack while playing football. Jack's team mates make fun of him every day and call him a 'weakling'. Tom pushed him to his knees in the mud and took a photo of him on his phone. Later on, Tom asked you to have a look at his Facebook page. He had uploaded the photo of Jack with the caption, 'This is what failure looks like'. Tom told you that several students in the class had 'liked' the photo already. He asked you to tell as many people as possible to 'like' the photo.

- How do you think Jack's classmates made him feel?
- What do you think of Tom's behaviour? What was Tom trying to achieve?
- How do you view the behaviour of other people involved (all the people who called Jack a 'weakling' and 'liked' the Facebook photo)? What were they trying to achieve?
- Would you define Jack's experience as bullying?
- What do you think Jack should do now?
- What would you do / say if you were Jack's friend?
- What would you do / say if you were Tom's friend?

Liam and Ella

Liam is in your class at school. Another classmate, Ella, asked Liam out, but he wasn't interested. Since then, Ella and her friends laugh at Liam every time he walks past them. They ask him loudly whether he 'prefers boys to girls' so that everyone can hear them. Some of the teachers also overheard them saying this, but they ignored the comments. A week after this Ella and her friends left information leaflets about gay rights and support organisations on Liam's desk.

- How do you think Ella and her friends made Liam feel?
- What do you think of Ella's behaviour? What was she trying to achieve?
- How do you view the behaviour of Ella's friends and the teachers who ignored the comment? What were they trying to achieve?
- Would you define Liam's experience as bullying?
- What do you think Liam should do now?
- What would you do / say if you were Liam's friend?
- What would you do / say if you were Ella's friend?

Response cards:

Tell an adult.

Tell an older person.

Encourage the person being bullied to tell someone.

Show the person bullying you don't approve.

Walk away and ignore the bullying.

Tell the person bullying to stop, if it's safe to do so.

Use violence against the person bullying to make them stop.

Go and get a group of friends to help you stop the bullying.

Make friends with the person being bullied so they're not isolated.

Ask the person being bullied if they are OK.