

# What if?

4-8

## Objective:

To help students understand the different ways bullying can happen.

## Materials:



Scenarios (see over page)



## Method:

In this activity students are presented with scenarios describing various bullying behaviour (physical, verbal and social); their task is to discuss and practise the best response to each situation.

Children are more likely to think of and use their problem-solving skills in bullying situations if they can first practise them with adult guidance.

- After reading each scenario, ask your students to think of several responses that the target and bystanders could give and the likely consequences of each response. Have students choose the best responses.
- Conduct role plays in which **the teacher plays the role of a child who bullies**, and students practise using the responses they've identified as effective.
- Make sure that students have a chance to play both targets and bystanders, and that the responses include asking an adult for help.

Social bullying may be a new concept for students. Talk to your students about how telling a classmate that they can't play or telling other children not to play with you is a form of bullying when it's done intentionally and repeatedly to hurt someone.

It's important to clarify that children don't need to include everyone in their play and activities every single time. There may be occasions when it's really not a good time for someone else to join them. Practise how to say no, kindly and sensitively. For example, they could say, "Sorry, we're right in the middle of doing this, but we're almost finished – you can play with us as soon as we finish this."



### Scenarios:

#### Scenario 1: Physical bullying

Whenever James sits on his favourite bench in the playground, Hunter tells his friends, "Watch this". Hunter walks over to the bench and sits right next to James. Then he uses his body to push James off the end of the bench and on to the ground. Hunter and his friends laugh at James, and James tries not to cry.

#### Scenario 2: Verbal bullying

Emily went to the zoo last weekend. When she went to school she started calling the children in her class by animal names. Emily called Sophie, "Elephant". Sophie's face got red, and she left the group to play by herself. Now, whenever Sophie tries to rejoin the group, Emily and some of the other kids call out, "Sophie is an elephant," which makes Sophie very unhappy.

#### Scenario 3: Social bullying

Ella told her friends to stay away from Hana because, "Hana isn't cool". Now, whenever Hana tries to play with Ella or one of her friends, they say, "No, we're too busy". Hana feels left out and doesn't know why they won't play with her.

#### Role Play:

Role playing is an effective strategy for allowing students to learn and practise new skills, to understand the motivations behind certain types of behaviour, and to address real-life problems through action. The role playing should emphasise appropriate responses to bullying behaviours, both for students who are bullied and students who observe bullying.

Depending on the students' level of maturity and experience with role playing, teachers will need to play a facilitative role in:

- Assigning roles (note that students should **NOT** be asked to portray the role of the person who bullies).
- Coaching students as they explore the scenario and develop their responses.
- Setting time limits.
- Providing a context for observation and feedback as students present their role plays.
- Debriefing and discussing the activity.
- Helping students summarise and assimilate their learning.