

Be an Upstander! Understanding and Stopping Bullying

Materials Needed: Large paper or poster board, colored markers or crayons, several small strips of paper, a pen or pencil, prepared scenario cards (described below).

Lesson Activities:

1. Introduction: Friendship & Fairness (5 mins)

Start with a chat: "What makes a good friend?" Talk about kindness, respect, and fairness. Ask: "What happens when someone isn't treated fairly or kindly by others?" Introduce the idea that sometimes, this unfairness can be bullying.

2. What is Bullying? (10 mins)

Explain the definition of bullying: It's when someone **repeatedly** and **on purpose** says or does mean or hurtful things to another person who has a hard time defending themselves. It involves a **power imbalance**.

Discuss the different types:

- **Physical:** Hitting, kicking, pushing, taking belongings.
- **Verbal:** Teasing, name-calling, threats, mean jokes.
- **Social/Relational:** Leaving someone out on purpose, spreading rumors, embarrassing someone in public.
- **Cyberbullying:** Hurtful messages or images online, through texts, or in games.

Activity: Write each type of bullying on a separate small strip of paper. Write down examples of actions (e.g., "calling someone a mean name," "pushing someone on the playground," "telling lies about someone," "sending a mean text message," "ignoring someone to be mean"). Have the student sort the example actions under the correct type of bullying.

3. Feelings Matter (10 mins)

Discuss how bullying makes people feel. Ask: "How do you think someone feels when they are being bullied?" (sad, scared, alone, angry, confused). "How might someone who is bullying others feel?" (maybe angry, insecure, wanting power - emphasize that hurting others isn't okay, no matter the reason). "How might someone feel who sees bullying happening?" (uncomfortable, scared, unsure what to do).

Activity: Draw simple faces showing different emotions related to bullying scenarios.

4. Bystander vs. Upstander (15 mins)

Explain: A **bystander** is someone who sees bullying happen but doesn't do anything. An **upstander** is someone who sees bullying and does something safe to help.

Brainstorm safe ways to be an upstander:

- **Don't join in.**
- **Say something kind** to the person being bullied later.

- **Distract** the person bullying (change the subject, ask a question).
- **Tell a trusted adult** (parent, teacher, coach). This is NOT tattling; it's reporting unsafe behavior.
- If safe, tell the person bullying to **stop** in a clear, calm voice.
- **Support** the person being bullied (walk with them, invite them to join you).

Activity: Role-Playing Scenarios! Use simple pre-written scenarios on cards. Example: "You see someone making fun of a kid's drawing in art class." "You notice someone keeps leaving your friend out of a game at recess." Act out the scenarios, with the student practicing different safe upstander strategies. You can play different roles.

5. Create an Anti-Bullying Pledge/Poster (15 mins)

Time to get creative! On the large paper or poster board, have the student design an anti-bullying poster or write a personal pledge. It could include drawings, key phrases (like "Be Kind," "Be an Upstander," "Stop Bullying"), or list the upstander actions they learned.

6. Wrap-up & Review (5 mins)

Review the key points: What bullying is, the different types, how it feels, and most importantly, how to be a safe and helpful upstander. Emphasize that telling a trusted adult is always a good choice if they see or experience bullying. Admire their pledge/poster and discuss where they might display it as a reminder.