

BULLY PREVENTION 101

Middle and High School Resource Guide



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Bullying Prevention 101:

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Section Two: Advocacy and Self-advocacy

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SLIDE 1 | Introduction

Section Two: Advocacy and Self-advocacy

What is it, and what does it have to do with bullying prevention?

Slide #2: Did You Know? How many states have bullying prevention laws?

Slide #3: What Is Advocacy and Self-advocacy?

Slide #4: Video: Advocacy and Self-advocacy

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Slide #6: What If I'm Being Bullied?

Slide #7: What If I Witness Bullying?

Slide #8: What If I Witness Cyberbullying?

Slide #9: Opinion Poll: What is the most powerful action you can take to help someone who is being bullied?

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SLIDE 2

Did You Know? How many states have bullying prevention laws?

Objective: Begin each section with a classroom question, followed by insight and education into the answer.

Talking Points:

Ask students to respond either (1) in class, or, (2) online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LawsBullyingPrevention>

How many states have bullying prevention laws?

- A. None
- B. 25
- C. 35
- D. 50

Answer: All 50 states.

State Laws that Address Bullying

Most states have laws that provide protections for bullying situations. The content of each law varies considerably. To learn more about your state's law, check out the [interactive map](#) on the StopBullying.gov website.

State laws might include the following:

- *Purpose statement:* Outlines the detrimental effects of bullying, and declares that bullying of any kind is unacceptable.
- *Statement of scope:* Explains what settings this policy covers.
- *Specification of prohibited conduct:* Includes a specific definition of bullying, including cyberbullying, and is consistent with other federal, state, and local laws.
- *Enumeration of specific characteristics:* Lists actual or perceived characteristics that have historically been targets of bullying.
- *Development and implementation of LEA (local educational agencies):* Requires every school to develop and implement bullying prevention policies.
- *Review of local policies:* Requires states to review local policies on a regular basis.

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- *Communication plan:* Includes a plan for notifying students, parents, and staff about bullying prevention policies.
- *Training and preventative education:* Requirement that school districts provide training for all school staff.
- *Transparency and monitoring:* Requirement that schools to report the number of bullying incidences annually to the state.

Federal Laws That Address Harassment

Students may have additional protections under federal law when the bullying is based on:

- Race, color, or national origin
- Sex
- Religion
- Disability

When the bullying is about someone's race, color, national origin, sex, religion, or disability, this is considered harassment at the federal level. Some state and local laws may provide additional protections on other bases, including bullying that happens because of real or perceived sexual orientation.

Activity

Invite students to look up their state law on the interactive map at

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/laws/index.html>

Encourage students to look up their school policy on bullying, harassment, or unwelcome conduct.

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SLIDE 3

What Is Advocacy and Self-advocacy?

Objective: Provide an overview of advocacy and self-advocacy and their relationship to addressing and preventing bullying.

Talking Points:

Define advocacy and self-advocacy, and then provide how it relates to bullying prevention.

What is advocacy?

Advocacy means looking out for other students who are being bullied, are vulnerable to being hurt or harmed, or are isolated from other students. Advocates help by making sure that these students aren't isolated and are protected from harm.

What is self-advocacy?

Self-advocacy means communicating on your own behalf, letting others know what you need, and taking action in a direct and respectful manner.

Being your own advocate means that you ask for what you need while respecting the needs of others. For example, if you are at a store and a clerk ignores you, you are able to ask in a polite way to be served.

Why is this skill important? Self-advocacy helps you:

- Be involved in the decision-making process
- Obtain what is helpful for you
- Learn how to say "no"
- Respectfully express disagreement or different opinion
- Help address and prevent any bullying you're experiencing

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SLIDE 4

Video: Advocacy and Self-advocacy

Objective: This video explains the concepts of advocacy and self-advocacy as they relate to bullying.

Talking Points:

1. Provide the video description

Description: Speaking up for oneself, expressing needs, and taking action are essential advocacy tools for youth of all ages. When you know that there are options for regaining control or influencing a difficult situation, you gain the skills and resilience to move through the obstacles that life brings. When you actively participate in learning self-advocacy skills, you are better prepared to resolve problems and understand when a problem requires adult help. Whether it's a disagreement with a friend or a serious situation like bullying, learning advocacy can change your world.

2. Show the video. The length is four and a half minutes.

Access video through these websites:

<http://www.pacer.org/bullying/video/player.asp?video=118>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjK-L2NzD7g>

3. Follow up with discussion questions

- How does advocacy for self and others intersect with preventing and addressing bullying?
- What are other advantages and benefits of learning the skill of advocating for self and others?

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SLIDE 5 | What If I Am Bullying?

Objective: Cover tips about what a student can do if they are demonstrating bullying behavior.

Talking Points:

Encourage students to think back to their responses on the “Do You Bully?” checklist. Ask if the student checked several boxes. Ask them to consider if they are maybe the one who is causing hurt, harm, or humiliation to others.

Share that while a student might bully, along with encouragement and guidance to recognize that bullying is about behavior, and that behavior is something they can change.

Think no one cares if you bully someone?

- How to take action: Recognize that people do care. The person being bullied cares. People care about you, too. The question to ask yourself is: How do I feel about being the one who exhibits that behavior?

Think it will make you feel better?

- How to take action: Recognize that your actions are hurting others who do not deserve it. Consider if it really does make you feel better. Consider other ways to build yourself up that don't involve bringing others down.

Think you will be part of the popular crowd if you bully others?

- How to take action: Do you think you have to bully to be accepted? Are your only options to bully or be bullied? Either way you lose. Know that you will likely develop a reputation, both with adults and peers, as someone who is not to be trusted.

Think it's OK to bully someone if you have been bullied?

- How to take action: Does taking out your frustration on someone else make anything better for you or them? If you have been bullied and are also being bullied, that's a really hard place to be. It's important for you to talk with a trusted adult so that you can develop a plan to change your situation.

Think you'll get attention if you bully?

- How to take action: If you bully, you'll get attention, but it's likely to be negative. Sooner or later you will have to deal with consequences for your actions. Schools have policies against bullying, ranging from meeting with school personnel to expulsion. Most social media sites enforce guidelines around bullying and harassment.

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Think you're in control?

- How to take action: Think about why you are bullying. Is it to be liked, to get back at someone, to feel powerful? Know that just like students who are bullied, those who bully are at a higher risk for physical and emotional health issues. It's important to know that there are other ways that are healthier to feel like you are in control over your decisions.

If you are bullying, know that:

- Your actions are hurting others that do not deserve it.
- There will be consequences. Schools have policies against bullying. Most social media do not allow it on their sites.
- You will likely develop a reputation, both with adults and peers, as someone who is not to be trusted.
- You, too, are at risk for physical and emotional health issues.

If you are bullying, what can you do to stop the behavior?

- Know that bullying is about behavior and that you can change your behavior.
- The first step is to talk with an adult you trust.
 - *This can be someone at school, at home, or in your community*
- Share what's going on. Ask for their advice and help.
- Set a goal to change the negative behavior.
 - *It's helpful to plan and strategize responses that are appropriate for the situation.*
- Find a mentor and role model to guide you through challenging situations.

Note: Students can also use the STUDENT ACTION PLAN to be self-advocates to change their behavior. Download at <http://www.pacer.org/publications/bullypdf/BP-25.pdf>

Bullying can be stopped, and an important step is to have a plan.

- Think about the bullying you have been involved in. Write down what has happened, when and where it takes place, who is involved, and how it made you feel.
- Then, consider how that situation could be different. Include what you would like to change, how things could be changed, and what would help you gain control over the situation.

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- Next, think about the steps needed to make those changes happen. List your role in this action plan, who else should be involved, and what they could do.
- Share this information with parents and an adult you trust at school. Ask for their help in implementing the action plan you created. Students don't have to solve this issue on their own, but can be empowered and included in the solution.

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SLIDE 6

What If I'm Being Bullied?

Objective: Share tips about what to do if you experience bullying, specifically around self-advocacy.

Talking Points:

Encourage the students to think back to their responses on the “Are You Being Bullied?” checklist. Let students know that if they are being bullied that they have options, which are listed below.

1. Know that you have the right to be safe at school and online. Research your school policy about bullying prevention, state laws that apply to bullying, and how to report inappropriate behavior to social media. Learn how each of these can be used to assert your rights.
2. Know that you have the right to report. Often students may not tell an adult because they don't want to be a “snitch” or tattletale. But telling isn't tattling. You know the difference – you tell to protect someone; you tattle to get someone in trouble. Know there are adults who care and who will help you find a solution.
3. Know that it's important to talk with an adult you trust and ask for their help. If you were able to stop the bullying on your own, you would do so, but the dynamics of bullying are that the other person is exerting power and control. Adults, whether a parent or an educator, are in the position to address that dynamic on your behalf and with your input.
4. Know your options to self-advocate. Being a self-advocate does not mean fixing the situation on your own. It means speaking up for yourself, telling people what you need, and taking action.

Note: Students can also use the STUDENT ACTION PLAN to be self-advocates to change their behavior. Download at <http://www.pacer.org/publications/bullypdf/BP-25.pdf>

Bullying can be stopped, and an important step is to have a plan.

- Think about the bullying you have experienced. Write down what is happening to you, when and where it takes place, who is involved, and how it made you feel.
- Then, consider how that situation could be different. Include what you would like to change, how things could be changed, and what would help you gain control over the situation.

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- Next, think about the steps needed to make those changes happen. List your role in this action plan, who else should be involved, and what they could do.
- Share this information with parents and an adult you trust at school. Ask for their help in implementing the action plan that you created. Students don't have to solve this issue on their own, but can be empowered and included in the solution.

Discussion Question

- What are other ideas or steps to take if you experience bullying?

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SLIDE 7

What If I Witness Bullying?

Objective: Share ideas about what a student can do if they witness bullying behavior.

Talking Points:

1. “Be there!” Ideas on how to be supportive of person being bullied.

Think about what it means to feel all alone, to believe that no one cares, to think that there is no way to change what is happening when you are experiencing bullying.

- That's a lonely place to be.
- When everyone around you looks the other way, ignores you, and maybe even sides with the person hurting you, it's hard to believe in yourself.
- It's hard to think that life will ever be any different.

Imagine how all that can be different. Imagine during those times when you feel broken, that someone is there for you.

- They talk to you, they tell you that it will be ok, that you matter.
- They say that you deserve to be treated with respect and kindness.
- They tell you that they will be there for you.
- Imagine how different that feels. It doesn't take away all the hurt, but hope is a powerful medicine for pain.

Share this example with your students:

Imagine you're walking through your neighborhood at night and you see a store being broken into. You know the owners of the store, and they're good people. What can do to “be there” for them?

You could confront the robbers, but that would probably end with someone getting hurt or making the situation worse. You could call the police and report the robbery, which would be both responsible and helpful. But in addition to reporting the robbery, perhaps the most helpful thing you could do would be to come by the store in the morning and express your support to the owners of the store, assure them that many in the neighborhood support them, and maybe even offer to help clean up.

Imagine how much something like that would mean to someone whose store had just been robbed. Now imagine a similar situation with someone being bullied. Confronting the students who are bullying directly may result in someone getting hurt. Reporting the bullying to an adult can certainly help.

One of the most powerful things you can do is to offer your support to the person who was bullied; let them know that they aren't alone and that you will be there for them, even if you can't fix the problem.

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Ideas to “be there” for someone

- When you see something, do something!
- Don't focus on fixing the problem, focus on how you can be supportive.
- Know that talking with someone will help them.
- Think of questions that will lead them to open up more to you.
- Show that you're listening by allowing them to talk more than you.
- Being there for someone doesn't mean solving the problem. It means being an emotional support.
- Avoid aggression, anger, and confusion.
- Be confident and genuine with your suggestions and words.
- Help them think through how they can tell their parents, and what to do if that doesn't help.
- Let them know that they can talk with you anytime.
- Never judge or blame them!

2. Help Build Them Up! Ideas to help with self-confidence, self-worth and self esteem

- Bullying so often tears people down.
- When you know that someone has been broken down, help them back up.
- Be creative, sincere, and generous in your efforts to support your peers
- Building someone up doesn't always have to involve compliments, or even words. Letting someone know that they are not alone is one of the most effective interventions according to those who have been bullied.

Building someone up is about:

- Letting them know that someone is there to help.
- Helping them get back their confidence.
- Encouraging them that they are ok just the way they are.
- Letting them know that they are important.

Share this example with your students:

Imagine someone is being bullied for being really into a hobby that you secretly enjoy as well. You know that most people don't think it's “cool,” but it's something you really love to do. You see someone else being made fun of for enjoying it, and you remember why you keep your own enjoyment a secret. You don't want to join them at the receiving end of this behavior.

But what if there was a way for you to support this person without putting yourself in harm's way? You don't have to make a public declaration, but even talking privately to this person and letting them know that you understand can make a huge difference. And if you want to make an even bigger impact, make an effort to include this person at school. Maybe now that you know there's someone else who shares your interests, neither one of you will feel so alone.

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Ways to build someone up

- Invite them into a group activity.
- Talk with them during class breaks, even if it's just to say "hi."
- Actively make your non-verbal communication more inclusive, like leaving seats open at your lunch table rather than putting your stuff there.
- Include them in conversations. Even if they don't want to talk, make sure they know they are a part of the discussion.
- Recognize the things that they do really well, and compliment them on their talents.
- Don't feel obligated to know the answer to the situation. Sometimes listening is the most genuine way to show support.
- Remind them that they have you as a friend.
- Offer to do activities together that will guarantee a smile or even a laugh.
- Remind them that no one deserves to be disrespected, and that it won't last forever.
- Strategize positive ways to react if it happens again.
- Things to say to the person being bullied:
 - I'm here for you.
 - You didn't deserve that.
 - You are a good person in a bad situation.
 - That person was wrong to do that.
 - Let's tell someone who can help.
 - Let's find someone that you can talk to about this.
- Simply listening and showing that you believe and care about what is going on will do wonders!

3. Turn a 180 – Flip a negative to a positive

Help students learn what it means to turn a 180 – flipping a negative situation to a positive. Research has shown that students are the most effective people to intervene in a bullying situation. Helping doesn't always mean directly confronting the person bullying. You can show your support by diverting the situation in a more positive direction.

- It's not easy to be one person against a wave of negativity, but when one person speaks up, others will follow.
- The biggest obstacle is the belief that you are powerless. You CAN make a difference.

Turning a 180 is about:

- Redirecting a negative situation
- Creating a more supportive school environment
- Deescalating bullying situations.

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Empowering students to intervene in a bullying situation doesn't remove responsibility from adults in the school. Adults need to play an active role in bullying prevention, too. Often young people feel like they don't have control over their own lives – but you CAN make a difference for your peers who are being bullied.

Share this example with your students:

During class, your teacher announces the winner of the science fair – a quiet, intelligent girl who doesn't have many friends. Immediately a bunch of your classmates start mocking her, joking about how she'll never get a date to prom unless she makes one in the lab herself. You can see that this girl is getting really upset. You feel awful – she should be able to celebrate her big win.

What can you do? The whole class is starting to turn on this girl. You're not sure that you're brave enough to tell them to stop making fun of her...but maybe there's a way for you to divert the situation. You take another look at her project, on display in the front of the room, and realize that it's actually a pretty cool cell phone-controlled robot. You start talking loudly to one of your friends about how cool it is, and ask the inventor if you can try it out. Pretty soon the rest of the class shifts their attention to watching the robot zoom around the classroom. Now everyone is focused on this girl's amazing invention, rather than on tearing her down.

Ideas to turn a 180

- Change the subject when your peers start tearing someone down.
- Make a point of saying something positive about a person who's getting picked on.
- Reach out to targets of bullying to show them that people do care about them.
- Be blunt and surprise the person bullying by asking why they did/said it, but only if this is something you feel safe doing.
- Let the person being harmed know that you think they are a good person.
- Talk to an adult you think would handle the situation in the most effective way.
- Talk to the person bullying and educate them on ways to respect others.
- Anytime you read negativity about someone online, be sure to add something positive about them.
- Report! There are ways to remove hurtful postings online.

Discussion Question

- What are other ideas or steps to take if you see bullying?

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SLIDE 8

What If I Witness Cyberbullying?

Objective: Provide ideas on ways that peers can support peers who are experiencing cyberbullying

Talking Points:

Let students know that if they see someone being bullied online, here's what they can do:

Don't participate. Don't "like" or share posts that are bullying someone. Although you may feel pressure to join in if a lot of other people are, you can make your own choice not to contribute to the situation.

Report it. Even if content isn't targeting you, you can still report it to the site, or to an adult who you trust.

Respond with positive support. If you feel comfortable, and if it's safe for you, post a comment showing solidarity with the target. Imagine what a difference one nice comment among a bunch of mean ones could make.

Reach out to the person being bullied. Send them a private message letting them know that you don't agree with what's happening, that they don't deserve to be treated like that, and that they're not alone.

Discussion Question

- What are other ideas you have?

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SLIDE 9 | Opinion poll: What is the most powerful action you can take to help someone who is being bullied?

Objective: Provide an opportunity to engage classroom-wide or in an online poll in questions relevant to the audience

Talking Points:

Ask students to respond either (1) in class, or, (2) online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PowerfulActions>

1. Tell them that they don't deserve it.
2. Give them encouragement.
3. Help them tell a parent or teacher.
4. Invite them to spend time with you.

Students have the power to change the culture in their schools and communities so that bullying is no longer accepted. There are a lot of things you can do to help students who are bullied, and when you take action, it's important to do what fits you.

Discussion Questions

- Did the results surprise you?
- Is there another idea that would be more powerful than those listed?