

April: Theme is “Advocacy Skills”

EDUCATION: What is advocacy?.....

Suggested audience: Elementary, middle, and high school students

Did you know that more than 50 percent of bullying situations will stop when a peer intervenes? That shows just how powerful your actions in looking out for someone else can be!

- Look up the term “[advocacy](#)”
- Look up the term “[self-advocacy](#)”

How do these terms apply to what students can do to prevent and address bullying for themselves or others?

Student Action Plan Against Bullying (Download and print the [Student Action Plan Against Bullying](#))

Ready to take action to address bullying? Maybe not sure how to start? As a student, bullying is something that impacts you, your peers, and your school — whether you’re the target of bullying, a witness, or the person who bullies. Bullying can end, but that won’t happen unless students, parents, and educators work together and take action.

Start by creating a plan that works for you and your situation. This student action plan is an opportunity for you — either on your own or with your parents and teachers — to develop a strategy to change what’s happening to you or someone else. It’s your chance to make a difference.

The plan includes three steps:

- **STEP 1:** Describe the bullying that’s happening. Include dates, location, who is involved, and details of the behavior.
- **STEP 2:** Describe what you would like done about it. Think about how the situation could be stopped or prevented.
- **STEP 3:** What steps can you take to make that happen? Include who could help, what they can do, and what you can do.

(See examples on page 2)

INTERACTION: Project Connect.....

Suggested audience: ALL students

Project Connect joins students, schools, and communities to make a powerful statement about uniting against bullying. The process is simple. Students write a message about how they can make their school safe for students with disabilities on a strip of ORANGE construction paper.

- Create the strips (links) using sheets of 8 ½ x 11 ORANGE construction paper
- Cut into strips of 1 ½” to 2” wide and 11” long.
- The strips are then stapled or glued together, resulting in one long, connected chain that visually represents the power of uniting for a common cause.

The message is this: While one person can speak out against bullying, our message is much stronger when we come together to make a difference. It’s important to identify and include students with disabilities in the conversation.

View Project Connect online [here](#).

Examples

Step 1: Describe your experience	Step 2: Reflect on your ideas	Step 3: Develop potential solutions
<p>Think about the bullying you have experienced, seen, or even done yourself. Describe the situation, including where it happened, who was involved, what happened, and how it made you feel.</p>	<p>Then consider how that situation could be different. Include what you would like to see happen, what things could change, and what would help you feel more in control of the situation.</p>	<p>Next, think about the steps needed to make those changes happen. Consider what role you need to take, who would need to be involved, and what they would need to do.</p>

Example one: Self-advocacy

Kyla is a 10-year-old girl with Down syndrome. A classmate is making fun of her speech.

<p>Sometimes, when I talk, it can be hard to understand. When it happens, there is this kid named Jordan that imitates me, and he makes a big deal out of it. He exaggerates my words and then makes sure that all his friends hear it, and a lot of them laugh. It really hurts and makes me wish I didn't have to go to school.</p>	<p>I don't want to get anyone in trouble, I just want him to stop. It's hard when it feels like people are laughing at me because of something I can't control. I want to say something to him but it's not easy to do. I wish one of the other kids would stick up for me. Maybe I could talk with some of my friends and see if they would support me when this happens.</p>	<p>I am going to talk with my mom and ask her for ideas. I am going to ask my mom if we can go to my teacher together and let her know what's been happening. My friend Andrea is someone who is always at my side. I am going to ask Andrea if I can talk with her any time I'm feeling bad. When I feel ready, I want to prepare myself to say something to Jordan, but in the meantime I am going to remember that I have many people who care about me.</p>
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Example two: Advocacy

Nate, a 14-year-old student, is tired of seeing his classmate, Sam, being harassed online through an anonymous account.

<p>Someone at school created an anonymous social media account and keeps posting embarrassing pictures of Sam at lunch or between classes, turning them into memes. Other peers are liking the photos and the account now has a pretty large following.</p>	<p>I feel bad about what is happening to Sam, he must feel on edge all the time. I could reach out to Sam about how I can help and make sure he knows he isn't alone. I think I know who is posting the photos, but if I say something, I need to make sure it's not going to make things worse. I could encourage others to do or say something to show support for Sam, too. No one deserves to be treated that way.</p>	<p>I should show my school counselor screenshots of the account and images and ask what the counselor thinks of my ideas. I could also ask if there is anything we can do in class to talk about how hurtful online bullying is. I will report the account and talk with Sam about other ways I can help. I think it's important to also speak with my other friends. Together, we could post positive comments for Sam or encourage other peers to stop sharing.</p>
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