



## Choosing Kindness Unit Grade 8 • Ages 14-16

### TIME FRAME

Preparation: 5 minutes  
Instruction: 30 minutes

### MATERIALS

Responding to Bullying Activity sheet,  
one for each student

Five large, pieces of chart paper with  
questions from below, one set on each  
poster

RAK Journals

### [Kindness Concept Posters:](#)

Assertiveness, Caring, Responsibility

### LEARNING STANDARDS

Common Core: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.  
SL.8.1

Colorado: Comprehensive Health S.4,  
GLE.5, EO.a.b.; Reading, Writing and  
Communicating, S.1, GLE.1, EO.a

SEL: Self-awareness, Social awareness,  
Relationship skills

### [Learning standards key](#)

# What is Bullying?

Students will work with a small group to discuss what bullying is and share how they would react in different bullying scenarios.

## Lesson Background for Teachers

Bullying is aggressive and repeated behavior with a perceived power imbalance between the person who is bullying and the victim who is being bullied. Bullying can take many different forms, including physical, verbal, social and electronic means.

**Trigger warning:** Talking about emotions and situations where strong emotions arise can lead to students revealing personal information that might require follow-up by yourself or a school counselor. If a student reveals any worrisome information or reaction, please know your school protocol for providing support and resources. Before class, find out the school policy about reporting a concern about a student's mental health to a school counselor or administrator.

## Key Terms for Students

Consider writing key terms on the board before class to introduce vocabulary and increase understanding.

<b>ASSERTIVENESS</b>	Standing up for yourself and what you believe in while being respectful of the rights and beliefs of others.
<b>CARING</b>	Feeling and showing concern for others.
<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	Being reliable to do the things that are expected or required in your life, home, community and environment.
<b>UPSTANDER</b>	Someone who sees a wrong act and does something to help the situation.
<b>BYSTANDER</b>	Someone who stands by watches a situation without doing anything about it.



The RAK paradigm is the framework for teaching and building kindness skills.

RAK lessons teach kindness skills through a step-by-step framework of **Inspire, Empower, Act** and **Share**.

The **Share** step in the first lesson of each unit is intended to set the tone for teaching kindness.



## TIPS FOR DIVERSE LEARNERS

Students might benefit from:

- Being grouped with those with whom they feel comfortable since this is a sensitive topic; consider partnering a student who has been bullied with someone who will look out for that student.
- Drawing images on the self-adhesive poster to help reinforce learning.
- Being aware of the dynamics of the class during this discussion; group students with others with whom they feel comfortable since this is a sensitive topic. Consider partnering a student who has been bullied with a student who will look out for that student during the discussion.
- Refocusing suggestions from the teacher if the discussion is getting confrontational or heated.
- Discussing feelings or reactions to the scenarios with you, the school counselor or another adult after class, particularly if they seem distressed during the discussion.

## Resources

Scenarios developed by Silvia Diazgranados Ferráns, Robert L. Selman, and Luba Falk Feigenberg at the Harvard Graduate School of Education; research findings published in Harvard Educational Review Vol. 82 No. 4 Winter 2012

View PrevNet's Bullying Prevention and Intervention in the School Environment Factsheets and Tools for more information: [http://www.prevnet.ca/sites/prevnet.ca/files/prevnet\\_facts\\_and\\_tools\\_for\\_schools.pdf#page=7](http://www.prevnet.ca/sites/prevnet.ca/files/prevnet_facts_and_tools_for_schools.pdf#page=7)

WITS Programs bring together schools, families and communities to create responsive environments that help elementary school children deal with bullying and peer victimization. They are also partnering with the Canadian Red Cross on programming for older students. <http://www.witsprogram.ca/schools/>

## Share (3 mins)

Popcorn style, ask students to share words that come to mind when they hear the word, "bullying." You may want to record the words students share on the board in a web around the word "bullying." Students might share words like, hurtful, teasing, playground, mean, harmful, aggressive, etc.

Note: Be sure to remind students that no names are to be mentioned throughout this lesson. To support a safe classroom environment, students should not be sharing names of students who bully or who are bullied during classroom activities.

## Inspire

**Discussion** (10 mins)

Divide into groups of three or four students. Hand each group an activity sheet.

*Let's begin with a small group discussion about what you think it means to bully. In your groups, I want you to discuss the questions in Part One ONLY. One student can be the Recorder and write responses on the back, another student can be the Leader, another can be the Reporter (who will share the group's responses), and the fourth student (if you have one) will be the Timer. Spend about two to three minutes on each question.*

After the discussion, have the group's Reporter share and then write that group's responses on the self-adhesive posters with the questions. These posters will be used as reference during this unit.

NOTE: If students do not mention the answers below, make sure to discuss the information listed. It is important that students understand what bullying is and is not.

- What is bullying? (Possible answers: Bullying can be physical (pushing, hitting, hurting) or verbal (intimidation, gossip, put downs, being mean, criticizing, texting.) Bullying doesn't happen once, but is repeated behavior. It is done intentionally and involves someone who is perceived to be more powerful using that power against someone else.)
- Why do people bully? (Possible answer: Bullies may want power or status in a group or to be in charge. They may put down other people because they don't feel good about themselves.)
- What's something you can do when you witness bullying? (Guided answers: We can become an **upstander** rather than a **bystander**. How? Look away. Don't join the bully. Change the subject. Speak out. Get help from a trusted adult if needed. Be assertive)
- What does it mean to you to stand up to a bully? Whose **responsibility** is it to stand up to a bully?



## Empower

### Bullying Scenarios (10 mins)

In your same groups, you are going to discuss the bullying scenarios in PART TWO and what you would do if you were different people in the situations. Determine in your groups each of your roles for this discussion (Recorder, Leader, Reporter, Timer).

Allow time for students to discuss the situations in their small groups. If time permits, have the class discuss the scenarios as a whole class.

### Wrap Up (5 mins)

To gauge understanding of the material, choose from either the evaluation or reflection questions as discussion, writing or journal prompts. Consider providing additional time for deeper evaluation and reflection as needed.

### Evaluation Questions

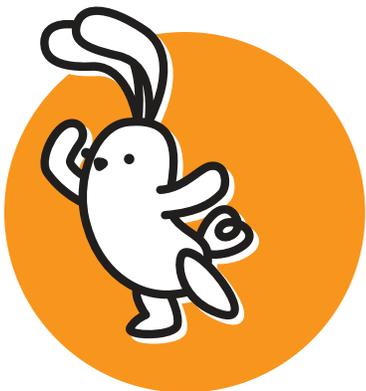
- What is bullying?
- Why do people bully?
- What's something you can do when you witness bullying?

### Reflection

- Describe a time when you were bullied or you bullied someone. How did you feel? What did you do? Would you act differently now?
- Is there something that you learned today that would help you to respond to bullying in a new way?
- How do you think ignoring a bullying situation impacts the bully and the person being bullied?

### Summary

*Bullying is repeated unwanted aggressive behavior where there is a perceived power imbalance between the person who bullies and the victim being bullied. Bullying is not acceptable at our school or in our community. Being an **assertive upstander** when you witness a bullying incident is a kind and **caring** act that can make a huge difference for someone else.*





## Act (2 mins)

### Kindness Minute

*There are always ways we can assertively help support someone who is being bullied. Trace your hand on a blank piece of paper. In the middle of your hand write, "stop bullying." On each finger, write one way that you can help prevent bullying or be an upstander when you see bullying taking place. Unlike many of the negative words we have on the board associated with the word "bullying," this hand will remind us of how we can help foster kind and caring classrooms and communities.*

### Kindness in Action

*There are always ways we can assertively help support someone who is being bullied. Trace your hand on a blank piece of paper. In the middle of your hand write, "stop bullying." On each finger, write one way that you can help prevent bullying or be an upstander when you see bullying taking place. Unlike many of the negative words we have on the board associated with the word "bullying," this hand will remind us of how we can help foster kind and caring classrooms and communities.*



# Responding to Bullying

## Activity Sheet

### NAMES OF GROUP MEMBERS

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### Part One: Discussion About Bullying

- What is bullying?
- Why do you think people bully?
- What is something you can do when you witness bullying?
- What do you think it means to stand up to a person who bullies? Whose responsibility is it to stand up to a person who bullies?
- How do you think ignoring a bullying situation impacts a person who bullies and the person being bullied?

### Part Two: Bullying Scenarios—What Would You Do?

A group of popular students regularly tease an 8th grader and then unexpectedly invite her to join them in picking on another girl.

- What would you do if you were the girl being invited to join?
- What would you do if you were part of that group?

There is a lot of teasing and name calling going on in your school. While you are walking down the hallway with a same-sex friend, someone calls your friend “gay,” intending it as an insult.

- What would you do as the friend?
- What would you do if someone yelled that at you, intending it to be an insult?

Students hang out in the bathrooms between classes at your school. They see a lot of students “getting jumped” (or ganged up on) in the bathroom during the school day.

- What would you do if you saw someone getting jumped?
- What would you do if you were jumped?

