

How to be an Active Bystander?

Time needed: 30 minutes

Recommended Level: Grade 5-8

Categories: Bystanders, Cyberbullying, Empowering, Helping victims

Common Core Standard(s): Speaking & Listening, Writing to convey information

Purpose: Students will define what it means to be a bystander to cyberbullying, will recognize when bystanders become part of the problem, and will identify strategies bystanders can use.

DISCUSSION:

Discuss with the class: How would you handle it if someone you knew was caught doing something embarrassing during lunch and was being teased about it? Now imagine the bully recorded the incident and started to show it to everyone at his or her table. How are these two experiences different? (The first is between two people and there is no long term evidence - just word of mouth. The second involves more people and others may spread the story because it's on video and can be replayed.) Now imagine that the situation escalates. The bully decides to post the video to YouTube. How does this change things? (Now, not only are other people saying things, they are spreading it further and possibly posting comments that build up the situation.)

ACTIVITY:

Have students keep a chart of responses to the discussion above from the perspective of a bystander. Once you have read through the three scenarios, open up the discussion stage by stage. Clarify how bystanders are involved in each stage.

Transition students to finding solutions or interventions for each stage. What could they say to or do for the victim? What could be said to the bully? What could they say to other bystanders who viewed the video, forwarded it or posted comments? What other help could they gain?

Have students collaborate and publish a code of ethics that explains the responsibilities of those who witness cyberbullying.

FOLLOW-UP:

If multiple classes draft a code of ethics, each class can select representatives (1-2 students) to compare and contrast the code of ethics they developed with the intent to come up with one school-wide code of ethics.

Students can write short Public Service Announcements to promote the code of ethics they drafted.

Students can create Xtranormal (www.xtranormal.com) videos that depict one of the ethics from the code.



Helping Everyone with Anti-Bullying,
Respect & Tolerance

Duplication and distribution of this lesson plan is permitted and encouraged.

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