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# BYSTANDER REVOLUTION

## RECOMMENDED LESSON

### Social Bullying

This lesson outlines one simple way to integrate the Bystander Revolution Social Bullying video playlist and discussion questions into an elementary school classroom setting.

**Grade Level:**  
Elementary School

**Estimated Time:**  
45 minutes

**Common Core  
ELA Standards  
Grades 3–5:**  
SL.1.B, SL.1.C,  
SL.1.D, SL.2, SL.3,  
SL.5, W.2.A, W.2.B,  
W.2.C, W.2.D,  
W.2.E, W.2.F,  
W.3, W.4

## OVERVIEW

Students will discuss what social bullying is along with suggestions for actions they can take when they witness or experience it. Students will watch videos with personal advice on social bullying from celebrities, leaders, and students; share their own experiences; and discuss ways they can help. The lesson concludes with an opportunity for the educator to recap the lessons learned and present an optional homework assignment.

## OBJECTIVES

**Students will be able to:**

- Define the term “social bullying.”
- Empathize with peers who are the targets of social bullying
- Summarize solutions heard from celebrities, leaders, and students.
- Compare and contrast different prevention, intervention, and coping strategies.
- Apply the strategies to help themselves and others when they encounter social bullying.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Computer & internet access
- LCD projector (optional)
- [Social Bullying video playlist](#)
- Pens/pencils & paper

## PREPARATION

- First, watch the Social Bullying video playlist.
- Familiarize yourself with the definition of social bullying.

## PROCEDURE

### Introduction

(5 minutes)

**Introduce the topic by asking students the following questions:**

- Do you think people ever get bullied by their own friends?
- What is a rumor?
- Do you think excluding someone counts as bullying?

Then explain to students that the definition of social bullying is: *bullying that intends to cause harm by damaging someone’s friendships or social status. Social bullying often happens among friends and peer groups, e.g., excluding others from activities, spreading rumors intended to damage someone’s reputation, embarrassing someone in front of others, or withdrawing attention and friendship from a person.*

### KEY QUESTION

What is social bullying, and how can students address it?

### DEFINITION

**Social bullying is:** bullying that intends to cause harm by damaging someone’s friendships or social status. Social bullying often happens among friends and peer groups, e.g., excluding others from activities, spreading rumors intended to damage someone’s reputation, embarrassing someone in front of others, or withdrawing attention and friendship from a person.

## Videos & Discussion

(25 minutes)

Introduce the video and discussion segment by explaining to students that they are about to watch short videos from celebrities, leaders, and students talking about their personal experiences with social bullying. Instruct students to think about a time they have witnessed social bullying and whether the advice in the videos would have helped.



### FEATURED SOLUTION

#### QUESTION RUMORS

Questioning a rumor is a great way to stop it in its tracks. When someone passes along a rumor, ask them how they know whether it's true.

Play videos 1-2 of the **Social Bullying** playlist. After viewing these videos, you can use the sample questions below to lead a conversation, as time permits. Each sample question has several follow-up questions that may be useful in the discussion.

#### 1. How is it bullying to spread a rumor about someone?

- Do people usually find out when there's a rumor being spread about them?
- How would it feel to know that people are talking about you behind your back?
- Do you think it's hard for the person the rumor is about to stand up for themselves?

#### 2. What are examples of things you can do when you hear a rumor about someone?

- Could you make the decision not to spread it?
- Could you ask your friends where they heard it?
- If you asked your friends why they were spreading a rumor, do you think that would help?
- If the person knows there is a rumor being spread about them, could you tell them privately you don't believe it?

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Play videos 3-4 then continue the discussion:

**3. Is being bullied or excluded by your friends as hurtful as other types of bullying? Why?**

- What do you think it feels like to be bullied by your friends?
- How might it feel to be isolated or left out by your friends?

**4. Why do you think someone would bully their friends?**

- Could they be trying to gain more power in their group of friends?
- Do you think they may do it because they're jealous of someone? How does that work?
- Is it possible that they may be dealing with their own problems, so they try to make someone else feel bad instead?

**5. Can imagining how a person being bullied is feeling help you figure out how to respond?**

- If you know how it feels to be excluded or gossiped about, do you think you would be more likely to help someone else who is currently in that position?
- Do you think asking your friends to imagine how the person being bullied feels would inspire them to stop bullying too?

Play video 5 then continue the discussion:

**6. If you are uncomfortable with how your friends treat you, what are examples of things you can do about it?**

- Can you tell them they're making you feel bad and ask them to change the way they treat you?
- If your friends are bullying someone or pressuring you into bullying others, can you tell them to stop, or say that it isn't cool and you won't join in?
- What can you do if talking to your friends doesn't work?
- Could you try to make new friends?

**7. Why might it be good to have friends in different social groups?**

- Can meeting new people be fun?
- How can meeting someone new benefit you? How could it help them?
- How can you go about meeting new people?
- Could joining new activities help? How?

**SUGGESTED STRATEGY**

If you see someone left out, ask them if they want to sit at your lunch table. It's such an easy gesture, and it could make their day.

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Play videos 6–7 then continue the discussion:

**8. In Tony Robbins’ video, he tells the story of a group of kids who dressed up to support a peer who was bullied. Why do you think this strategy worked so well?**

- Do you think the group showing support made others think twice about how they were bullying the kid?
- Do you think it helped that some popular students were in the group showing support?
- Did the group make being kind look cooler than being mean?

**9. Do you think Parker is right, that a student’s example is more powerful than an adult’s? Why?**

- Have you ever looked to your friends, or to older students, as examples of how you should act?
- Do you think if you set a good example by treating other people well, your friends might be more likely to do it too?
- Do you think people would be less likely to bully if they were in a school where no one else bullied?

**SUGGESTED STRATEGY**

Be a supportive friend. Look at your own behavior, and ask yourself honestly, “Do I increase or decrease the self-confidence of my friends?” You could be bullying your friends without even being aware of it.

## WRITING ASSIGNMENT

*(5 minutes)*

Ask students to write two sentences about something they would do differently, or could improve upon, if they encounter social bullying in the future. If time permits, ask students to share what they’ve written with the class.

## CLOSING

*(5 minutes)*

Recap what students can do if they witness social bullying and aren’t sure what to do. Ask students when they would consider the following strategies:

When would you...

- ask your friends to change the way they act?
- seek out friends who support you and make you feel good?
- offer sympathy to an isolated student or invite them to join your friends?
- get a group of friends to show support for a student being bullied?
- question rumors and choose not to spread them?
- tell a teacher or parent?

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## OPTIONAL HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

### 1. Watch a video and reflect in writing

Have students visit [bystanderrevolution.org](http://bystanderrevolution.org) and watch another video of their choosing. Ask students to write a letter to the person in the video, telling them why they agree or disagree with the advice presented. Ask them to tell the person how they might apply what was said to their own life.

### 2. The Weekly Stand

The Weekly Stand is a list of 52 simple, fun, transformative actions bystanders can take to reduce bullying and improve school culture. Each action contains helpful background information, suggested strategies and phrases to use, and a video for inspiration.

Have students go to [bystanderrevolution.org/weekly](http://bystanderrevolution.org/weekly), choose one of the actions to complete, and then turn in proof that they did it through some creative means: a photo, a screenshot, a short video, an essay, or even a comic strip.

### ABOUT BYSTANDER REVOLUTION

Bystander Revolution is an online resource offering practical, crowdsourced advice about simple things individuals can do to take the power out of bullying.