MAKING DECISIONS: ALLY OR BYSTANDER

Suggested Grade Level: 4 – 5.

Length of Time: Two class periods of 45 minutes each.

Goal
- For students to explore their own roles in incidences of bullying, harassment and name-calling.
- To explore and practice possible interventions.
- To define what it means to take action/be an ally.

Objectives
- Students will talk about bullying, harassment and name-calling.
- Students will select their place in incidences of bullying, harassment and name-calling and group themselves with others who share this place.
- Students will discuss alternatives to ignoring bullying, harassment and name-calling.

Academic Standards
- Health: Demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health and avoid or reduce health risks.
- Health: Identify how peers can influence healthy and unhealthy behaviors
- Social Studies: Explore, identify, and analyze how individuals relate to others.

Educators’ Notes
This discussion with children will explore how all of us, at one time or another, have had to make a decision about whether or not we will intervene or take a stand when we witness the name-calling, bullying or harassment of a friend or stranger. Often we make these decisions in the moment, reacting to situations as they come up. Today we are going to take the time to explore many different situations of bullying or name-calling that we see here in school and in your neighborhoods and think about how we make decisions about intervening, participating or walking away.

Materials
“4 Corners” placards (included in lesson) hung in the four corners of the room, Ally or Bystander: Situation Sheet (included in lesson), Take a Stand and Lend a Hand (handout), room arrangement suitable for activity and movement, chart paper or whiteboard, markers.

Activity
- Explain to the students that this activity looks at situations where you must decide, in that moment, how to react if you see someone being teased or bullied. Sometimes you may do something. Sometimes you may not. It often depends on the situation, how well you know someone, if they are older or younger, etc. This activity involves movement and action.
• Read the scenarios out loud to the class. (Choose from the list of attached scenarios and/or make up additional ones that are appropriate for your classroom.) For each situation, students will make a decision regarding how they will respond using the following four choices:
  o Ignore the situation or walk away.
  o Attempt to negotiate or stop the situation.
  o Talk to the person privately later.
  o Seek assistance from an adult or someone older.

• Instruct students to walk to the corner of the room that represents how they would act in response to that particular scenario. With each scenario, invite a couple of students from the different corners to say why they chose to stand in a certain corner. Ask them what they would say to the person being teased or bullied and what they would say to the people doing the hurtful teasing or bullying.

• Use some open-ended questions to generate further discussion at the end.
  o Did you respond differently in different scenarios?
  o What influenced your decisions with each scenario?
  o With whom did you feel most comfortable intervening?
  o When were you more likely to ignore the situation? Why?
  o Would you respond in some other way not represented by the four corners?

• Discuss what it means to be a bystander.
  o How do you think the person being teased feels if people are listening or watching and don’t do anything?
  o How do you feel when you don’t do something?

• Talk about what it means to be an ally. Using chart paper or a whiteboard, brainstorm ways to be an ally. (If you use chart paper you can keep it hanging on your classroom wall.) Ask students to also think about if there are times they feel unsafe being an ally. What could they do in those situations?

• In closing, ask students to think of one person to whom they could be a better ally and what they can do.

**Assessment and Evaluation**

• Can students define what it means to be an ally or bystander?

• Do you observe students sticking up for each other more?

• Can students identify ways to be an ally?

**Suggested Books for Students**

*Because of Anya*, Margaret Peterson Haddix.  
*The Liberation of Gabriel King*, K. L. Going.

*Crow Boy*, Taro Yashima.  
*No Castles Here*, A.C.E. Bauer.

*Jack and Jim: Picture Book*, Kitty Crowther.  
*Nothing Wrong with a Three-Legged Dog*, Graham McNamee.
One, Kathryn Otoshi.  
Teammates, Peter Golenbock,  
One Hundred Dresses, Eleanor Estes.  
Wings, Christopher A. Myers.  
Say Something, Peggy Moss.

Handouts available from Welcoming Schools

- Teasing or Bullying?
- Think Before You Act
- What Do You Say to ‘That’s So Gay!”

Additional Resources from Welcoming Schools

- Creating Welcoming Schools: Getting Started
- What You Can Do As an Educator to Create a Welcoming Elementary School
- Family Education and Community Building Forums
- Connecting with Colleagues
  - Connecting with Colleagues – Stereotype Confirmation: A Look at Sexual Orientation, Race and Culture
    - Stereotype Read-Arounds (handout)
    - Stereotype Confirmation (handout)
  - Connecting with Colleagues – Cultivating Conversations About Differences
- Bibliography for Elementary Age Children on Hurtful Teasing, Name-Calling and Bullying:
  - Our Favorites (A one page listing) or the Annotated Bibliography
- Books for Educators and Adults:
  - Our Favorites (A one page listing) or the Annotated Bibliography
- A Look at Research on Prejudice and Stereotypes
- Gender Identity and Stereotypes: Impact on Children
- Resources on Bullying
- Creating Community: Social and Emotional Learning Resources

ALLY OR BYSTANDER — SITUATION SHEET

There are 14 situations listed here. This activity takes two 45-minute periods to complete all 14. If you only have 45 minutes to spend on this activity, use situations: 1,2,4,5,7,8 and 9.

1. A classmate or friend constantly makes fun of another student because she or he is small for his/her age
2. An older student makes fun of a younger student because he or she is small for his/her age
3. When you are with a group of friends, one of them makes fun of a younger student because of the way he or she dresses.
4. A new kid at school calls your friend a racial slur.
5. A friend of yours calls a new kid at school a racial slur.
6. A kid you don’t know calls another kid you don’t know a racial slur
7. A new kid at school calls your friend “gay”
8. A group of students your age keeps saying, “That’s so gay” to mean they don’t like something.
9. A group of students your age keeps saying, “That’s so gay” to mean they don’t like something and you know that your friend’s dads are gay.
10. A friend of yours keeps saying to other boys things like, “Hey come on, throw harder, don’t throw like a girl.”
11. A boy in your school that you don’t know very well keeps saying to other boys things like, “Hey, come on, throw harder, don’t throw like a girl.”
12. A friend in your class teases a younger boy for having a teddy bear with a tutu.
13. A student in your class teases a boy for wearing a pink T-shirt and nail polish.
14. A girl in your class teases another girl for always playing sports with the boys at recess

Include any others that might apply to your school or community.
IGNORE THE SITUATION
OR WALK AWAY

INTERVENE MYSELF
TO STOP OR MEDIATE
THE SITUATION
Talk to the person in private

Seek assistance from an adult or someone older
TAKE A STAND AND LEND A HAND

Name-calling and bullying are problems that everyone must help solve. It may not be your fault that some students bully, but if you ignore it, laugh at it or do nothing in response to bullying that you witness, you may be a part of the problem. Being an ally or a friend to someone who is being picked on may feel uncomfortable or scary, but there are safe ways in which we can all “Take a Stand and Lend a Hand.”

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU SEE SOMEONE BEING BULLIED AT SCHOOL?

Ask yourself, “Is it my job to help?” What would happen if everyone said, “That’s none of my business; I don’t want to get involved?” Think about how you might feel if the bullying were happening to you. Would you feel bad, sad or mad? Would you feel lonely or hurt?

You and other students can lend a hand, even when you aren’t close friends with the people being bullied. Your school will be a better place if you help stop bullying. And making your school a better place is everyone’s job!

WHAT CAN I DO?

Lots of things! Think about what may work for you:

- Don’t just stand there … say something! Saying something can be scary, but not saying something is also scary — it makes you feel helpless.
- People who bully may think they’re being funny or “cool.” If you feel safe, tell the person to stop the bullying behavior. Say you don’t like it and that it isn’t funny.
- Don’t bully back! It won’t help if you use mean names or actions. And it could make things worse.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- Don’t encourage the bully by laughing at the bully’s actions or words.
- Don’t pretend nothing is happening.
- Don’t assume that person who is being bullied isn’t bothered by it.

BUT WHAT IF I DON’T FEEL SAFE TELLING STUDENTS WHO BULLY TO STOP?

That’s OK. No one should put himself or herself in an unsafe situation. How else can you lend a hand when bullying happens?

- Say kind words to the person who is being bullied, such as, “I’m sorry about what happened,” and “I don’t like it!” They need to know that most people don’t agree with what the bully is saying or doing. Help them understand that it’s not their fault. Be a friend. Invite that student to do things with you, like sitting together at lunch or working together on a project. Everyone needs a friend!
- Tell that student to talk to someone about what happened. Offer to help by going along.
• Pay attention to the other students who see the bullying. (These people are called “bystanders.”) Are any of them laughing or joining in with the bullying? These people are part of the problem. Let those bystanders know that they’re not helping! Don’t be one of them!

• Tell an adult. (This is important!!) Chances are the person who is being bullied needs help from an adult. And the student who is doing the bullying does, too. Often, the bullying does not get reported. Think about whom you could tell in your school — a teacher, counselor, cafeteria or playground aide, principal, bus driver or other adults you feel comfortable telling. If you need help telling, take a friend along.

**WHY DON’T SOME STUDENTS TELL WHEN THEY SEE BULLYING?**

• They may not want others to think they are “tattling.”

• They may think that it’s not their problem and that it has nothing to do with them.

• They may be afraid that the students who bully will pick on them next.

• They may think their friends will make fun of them for trying to help.

*Reporting that someone is getting bullied or hurt in some other way is not “tattling.”*

• Telling is very important! Adults at school can help. Ask them to do something about the bullying and ask them to help keep you safe after telling.

• Explain to your friends that bullying is not fair and not right. Encourage them to join in helping.

• The only person who benefits from silence is the person who bullies. But he or she doesn’t really benefit, because he or she needs help too!

• We all benefit from a safe and welcoming environment. We are all responsible for working to create such a community, and we can only do it together.

**WHAT IF THE BULLYING HAPPENS OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL?**

• If there is an adult around, report the bullying to an adult (your youth group leader, sports coach, etc.).

• No matter where the bullying happens, you should talk to your parents about bullying that you see or know about. Ask them for their ideas about how to help. We all must do our part! People who are bullied deserve to feel safe and welcome at school and in their neighborhoods. Everyone does!

• Young people who bully others need help to develop better ways to relate to people. If they don’t get help when they are young they could grow up to get into serious trouble. The person who bullies needs help just as much as the person who is being bullied!

*Adapted from the No Name-Calling Week Resource Guide by GLSEN Inc. from a handout by Take a Stand, Lend a Hand, Stop Bullying Now, a project of the Health, Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. See www.stopbullyingnow.org and www.nonamecalling.org.*