

It's Cool to Be Kind: Activity 1

From bystanders to upstanders

Children practice identifying the four roles of a bullying encounter (the person who bullies, the target of the bullying, the bystander, and the upstander) and what to do if they're a bystander or a target of bullying.

Goals for children



- ✓ **Identify** situations of harassment or bullying online.
- ✓ **Evaluate** what it means to be a bystander or upstander online.
- ✓ **Learn** specific ways to respond to bullying when you see it.
- ✓ **Know** how to behave if you experience harassment.

Let's talk



Why does kindness matter?

It's important to remind ourselves that behind every username and avatar there's a real person with real feelings, and we should treat them as we would want to be treated. When bullying or other mean behavior happens, most of the time there are four types of people involved.

- There's the aggressor, or person(s) doing the bullying.
- There's also someone being bullied – the target.
- There are witnesses to what's going on, usually called bystanders.
- There are witnesses to what's going on who try to positively intervene, often called upstanders.

If you find yourself the target of bullying or other bad behavior online, here are some things you can do:

If I'm the target, I can...

- Not respond.
- Block the person.
- Report them – tell my parent, teacher, sibling, or someone else I trust, and use the reporting tools in the app or service to report the harassing post, comment, or photo.

If you find yourself a bystander when harassment or bullying happens, you have the power to intervene and report cruel behavior. Sometimes bystanders don't try to stop the bullying or help the target, but when they do, they're being an upstander. You can choose to be an upstander by deciding not to support mean behavior and standing up for kindness and positivity. A little positivity can go a long way online. It can keep negativity from spreading and turning into cruelty and harm.

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If I'm the bystander, I can be an upstander by...

- Finding a way to be kind to or support the person being targeted.
- Calling out the mean behavior in a comment or reply (remember to call out the behavior, not the person), if you feel comfortable with that and think it's safe to do so.
- Deciding not to help the aggressor by spreading the bullying or making it worse by sharing the mean post or comment online.
- Getting a bunch of friends to create a "pile-on of kindness" – post lots of kind comments about the person being targeted (but nothing mean about the aggressor, because you're setting an example, not retaliating) .
- Reporting the harassment. Tell someone who can help, like a parent, teacher, or school counselor.

Activity



Materials needed:

- Handout: "From bystanders to upstanders" worksheet

Answers to "From bystanders to upstanders" worksheet:

Scenario 1: B, U, B (because not helping the situation), U, U

Scenario 2: U, B, U, U

Scenario 3: U, U, B, B, U

Scenario 4: The answers are all yours!

1. Read scenarios and categorize responses

After discussing the roles, pass out the worksheet and give your children 15 minutes to read the three scenarios and categorize each response.

2. Discuss the answers

Before or at the end of the discussion, ask them if they can tell you why it can be nice to have upstanders around at school and online.

3. Discuss those that were hard to categorize

Ask your children if any of the responses were hard to categorize and why. Have a discussion about that.

Takeaway

Whether standing up for others, reporting something hurtful, or ignoring something to keep it from being amplified even more, you have a variety of strategies to choose from depending on the situation. With a little kindness, anyone can make a huge difference in turning bad situations around.

Worksheet: Activity 1

From bystanders to upstanders

So now you know that a bystander can use their powers for good and be an upstander by helping someone out who's being bullied. Below are three scenarios that are examples of online bullying or harassment. If you want, create a fourth scenario that happened with people you know, and come up with responses that include both upstanding and basic bystanding. Each of the three scenarios already created has a list of responses. Read each response and decide whether it's what a bystander would do or what an upstander would do, then put a "B" for "bystander" or a "U" for "upstander" in the blank next to the response.

Scenario 1

A friend of yours dropped her phone by the drinking fountain near the school soccer field. Someone found it and sent a really mean message about another student to a bunch of people on her soccer team, then put the phone back by the drinking fountain. The student who was targeted told your friend she was a terrible person for sending that message, even though she wasn't the one who sent it. No one knows who sent the mean message. You...

- Feel sad for your friend but do nothing because no one knows who did that mean thing to her.
- Go find the person targeted and ask them how they feel and whether you can help.
- Spread the drama by sharing the mean message with other friends.
- And your friend get everybody on the soccer team to post compliments about the person who was targeted.
- And your friend anonymously report the incident to your principal, letting them know that everybody needs to talk about good phone security and locking their phones.

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Scenario 2

Your teacher created a class blog for language arts, giving the class the ability to write, edit, and post comments. The next day she's out sick and the substitute doesn't notice that things are going south in the class blog – someone is posting seriously mean comments about one of the students in the class. You...

- Comment on the comments by saying things like, "This is so not cool" and "I am _____'s friend, and this is not true."
- Ignore it until your teacher gets back.
- Get other students to post nice comments and compliments about the student being targeted.
- Tell the substitute that mean behavior is happening in the class blog, and they might want to let the teacher know.

Scenario 3

There's an online game that a bunch of your friends play a lot. Usually game chat is mostly about what's actually happening in the game. Sometimes it gets a little nasty, though that's usually more like friendly rivalry than anything really bad. But this one time, one player starts saying really nasty stuff about one of your friends who's playing, and they just won't stop. They even keep it up the next day. You...

- Call up your friend and tell them you don't like this any more than they do and ask them what they think you two should do.
- Call everybody you know who plays with you guys (making sure your friend knows you're doing this) to see if you can get everybody's agreement that it's time to call out the nastiness.
- Decide to wait and see if the kid stops, then maybe do something.
- Walk away from the game for a while.
- Look for the game's community rules and if bullying isn't allowed, report the nasty behavior using the game's reporting system.

Scenario 4

Create a real-life scenario as a class, based on a situation one of you has heard about, then come up with both bystander and upstander responses to show you definitely know what we're talking about now!