

Defining Bullying

Purpose: To help students understand what bullying is and that not all disagreements among peers or rude behavior constitutes bullying. There are 3 criteria that need to be present for it to be bullying. When bullying occurs, the victim(s) will need help because they may not be able to defend themselves. If students do not recognize bullying situations, they may not know their help is necessary.

Teachers:

- a. “Last week, we came up with some ground rules for our Class Meetings. Let’s go over those rules... (*Read your class rules aloud.*)”
- b. “In today’s class meeting, we are going to talk about what bullying behaviors look like and the definition of bullying. We hear the word “bullying” frequently and sometimes it is overused. It is important to understand when a behavior is bullying rather than an isolated argument or disagreement. There is an important reason to understand the difference. When a victim is bullied, he or she may not have the means to defend themselves so we have to be the courageous ones to recognize when it happens, so we are prepared to step in and help.

You’re going to watch a short clip from the movie Christmas story. In this clip, you will see the main character, Ralphie, walking home from school with his younger brother, Randy, and two friends, Swartz and Flick. As the four are headed home, they are confronted by their daily taunting from two older boys, Scut Farcus and Grover Dill. Though the boys outnumber Scut and Grover, it doesn’t stop these two from being able to tease and taunt the four boys, causing them to be afraid.”

- c. Show the clip from the film.
- d. After the clip, lead a class discussion about why the students think this is an example of bullying or not. List the following three parts to the definition of bullying so students can see them:

For a situation to be considered an example of bullying,

- a. The victim(s) is/are exposed repeatedly to negative actions
- b. The negative actions are hurtful in intent
- c. There is an imbalance of power between the bully and victim (the victim may have a difficult time defending themselves)

Use the following questions to facilitate a discussion so students can decide if this is an example of bullying or not. Are the above three statements evident in the interaction in the movie clip?

- i. How did Ralphie and his friends react when Scut Farcus came out from behind the fence?
- ii. Why do you think Randy just lied on the ground while Scut and Grover taunted the other three boys?
- iii. What types of actions did Scut and Grover do to intimidate the other boys?
- iv. Do you think this is the first time there has been an issue between the two groups of boys?
- v. Even though the younger boys outnumbered the older boys, how did Scut and Grover manage to dominate the situation?

e. Have a volunteer read one of the following scenarios to the class. After he/she read the scenario, call on volunteers to explain why it is or is not an example of bullying. If it IS bullying, have students point out the three components in the definition. If it is NOT bullying, call on volunteers to explain what is missing for it to be considered bullying. Please point out that each of the scenarios depicts inappropriate behavior and are not acceptable but the point of the exercise is to recognize when and action is an example of bullying. (You can decide based on time if you have time to do this activity today or save it for tomorrow OR you can select a few of the scenarios rather than all of them for sake of time.)

Scenario #1: Sam and Chris are best friends. Yesterday, Chris got to the cafeteria before Sam and sat with the rest of their friends and sat in the last seat left at the table. When Sam arrived in the cafeteria, there weren't any spots left at his usual table and he had to go sit with some friends he knew from his STAR class. Did Chris bully Sam by not saving him a seat?

Scenario #2: Stephanie is new to school this year. Usually when she goes to lunch, she walks through the cafeteria carrying her tray and goes from table to table looking for a place to sit. Students can usually see she is upset and nervous because she can't find a place to eat. Two tables tell her that their table is full, even though each has an empty seat or two. One table that has just 3 students gets up and moves to another area of the cafeteria when she sits at their table. Is Stephanie being bullied?

Scenario #3: Sydney and Jamie were friends since elementary school. They just started high school and Jamie made the dance team. She spends most of her time with her new friends from the team. She tells her new friends a lot of embarrassing stories about Sydney from when they were younger. Sydney sometimes sits with Jamie and her new friends on the bus or at lunch. They usually tease Sydney by calling her nicknames they made up from some of the stories Jamie shared with them. They laugh when they do it, but it makes Sydney feel uncomfortable and she has asked them several times to stop but it still continues. Is Sydney being bullied?

Scenario #4: Neil finds out that one of his friends, Mark, has been texting Neil's girlfriend. Neil is furious with his friend. He goes to their other friends and calls Mark all kinds of mean names while sharing how he has been texting his girlfriend. Later, he sees Mark standing in line for lunch and is still feeling really betrayed by his friend. As Neil passes him he calls him a jerk and shoves him into the wall before he heads into the lunchroom. Is Mark being bullied?