



Cyberbullying: Be Upstanding

Lesson Plan

Estimated time: 45 minutes

Essential Question: How can you be an “upstander” when cyberbullying occurs?

Learning Overview and Objectives

Overview: Students learn about the difference between being a passive bystander versus a brave upstander in cyberbullying situations.

Students reflect on what it means to be brave and to stand up for others. They fill out the **Why Care? Student Handout**, create a diagram of the players involved, and generate ideas about how bystanders can become upstanders. They then identify concrete solutions for dealing with cyberbullying situations.

objectives

Students will:

- Reflect on what it means to be brave and stand up for others offline and online
- Learn to show empathy for those who have been cyberbullied
- Generate multiple solutions for helping others when cyberbullying occurs

Materials and Preparation

Materials

• **Who Cares? Student Handout**

- Drawing paper and markers (for all students)

Preparation

- Make copies of the **Why Care? Student Handout**, one per group of four or five

Parent Resources

- Send home the **Cyberbullying Parent Tip Sheet**
- Send home the **Connected Culture Parent Tip Sheet**
- Send home the **Connected Culture Parent/Teacher Intro Video**

Key Vocabulary

- Bystander: Someone who sees cyberbullying happening, but does nothing to help
- Upstander: Someone who helps when they see cyberbullying occur
- Empathize: To imagine the feelings that someone else is experiencing



Cyberbullying: Be Upstanding

Lesson Plan

teaching plans

Introduce

REVIEW Key Vocabulary with students.

ASK *What does it mean to be brave?*

Sample responses:

- *To be courageous*
- *To stand up for others*
- *To go against social pressure to do what is right*

ASK *How can you show bravery if someone is being cyberbullied and you are a witness?* (Remind students that cyberbullying is the use of digital media tools such as the Internet and cell phones to deliberately upset or harass another person.) **EXPLAIN** that you are going to watch videos of a teen who was part of a cyberbullying situation.

Sample responses:

- *Standing up for the target*
- *Empathizing with the target*
- *Getting help from a trusted adult*

DISCUSS the importance of being an upstander. **DISCUSS** the qualities of an upstander with students.

An upstander:

- *Is not directly involved in the cyberbullying incident, but steps in to help anyway*
- *Empathizes with the targets of cyberbullying, letting them know that they care and are listening*
- *Does not spread rumors or go along with cyberbullies because of peer pressure, and may even tell the cyberbully to stop*
- *Encourages the target to tell a trusted adult about the situation*

Teach 1: Create a Cyberbullying Map

DISTRIBUTE the **Who Cares? Student Handout** and ask students to read the story about Kevin and José.

GUIDE students to use drawing paper and markers to create a map showing all the players in this event (bully/bullies, target, bystanders). Students may choose to show a labeled web, use concentric circles, or draw something more representational. Ask students to share their maps with the class.

Teach 2: Read about Bystanders

Have students fill out the rest of the Student Handout. Discuss the Handout questions with them.



Cyberbullying: Be Upstanding

Lesson Plan

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- *Who is doing the cyberbullying in this story?* (Encourage students to decide for themselves and support their reasoning. Ask them to consider if it is only José? What about the boys at school who helped him upload the video to the website? What about the people who posted nasty comments? What about the people who viewed the video?)
- *Who are the bystanders?* (The students at school who witnessed the abuse and kids online who viewed the video.)
- *What would you do if you were a bystander?* (Guide students to think about empathizing with Kevin, telling the other boys to take down the video, writing public comments on the video saying that Kevin did not want the video up, or encouraging Kevin to tell a trusted adult.)
- *What would you say to José if you wanted him to stop?* (I might tell him that it is unfair to put up the video without Kevin’s permission, and let him know how hurtful it is to Kevin. This may not work, but at least it is an attempt.)
- *What would you say to Kevin or do for him to show your support for him?* (Guide students to talk about how it is important to listen to Kevin and empathize with him, and then discuss with him what actions to take.)
- *What could you say to the other kids at school who viewed the video and left cruel comments?* (I could let them know that they are followers. I could tell them how Kevin feels.)
- *How could you have involved a trusted adult?* (Guide students to consider what the consequences of telling an adult for Kevin could be. The other students might make fun of him, so he has to confide in someone who is trustworthy and has the skill and authority to help him.)

Make sure students understand that the people who posted cruel comments were just as guilty of being bullies as the boys who originally uploaded the video. Discuss with students how trusted adults could help, including asking a guidance counselor to talk to Kevin, a technology teacher to investigate whether it would be possible to remove the video from the site, and a school principal to enforce school bullying rules.

Have students add to their concept map drawings, clearly labeling their proposed solutions.

Wrap Up and Assess

ASK *What kinds of online behaviors could be considered cyberbullying?* (Posting someone else’s video without permission, leaving cruel comments on a website.)

ASK *What does it mean to be a bystander to cyberbullying?* (A bystander sees cyberbullying happening, but does nothing to help. Some bystanders also might get involved in the bullying, and some will spread the disaster further by recruiting even more bystanders.)

ASK *What are some things a bystander can do to become an upstander?* (Show understanding and support for the target, don’t react to the bully, tell the bully to stop, or ask a trusted adult for help. Remind students that a

 **Cyberbullying: Be Upstanding**
Lesson Plan

trusted adult is someone who you believe will listen and has the skills, desire, and authority to help you.)

If there is time, have students read Kevin and José’s story again aloud as a whole class. Have a handful of students take turns reading sentences. When the story is over, have other students add one sentence each. Let them know that the goal is to turn the story into one in which one of the bystanders turns into an upstander and helps Kevin. If there is time, students can change their own cyberbullying stories into stories of upstanders.

 **Extension Activity**

Students brainstorm about an anonymous reporting system. Tell them that most kids say they would report cyberbullying if they did not have to identify themselves. Ask students to brainstorm ways for students to anonymously report cyberbullying at school. Have them make an action plan for dealing with the problem and a proposal for convincing administrators, teachers, students, and parents to get involved.

Alignment with Standards — National Educational Technology Standards for Students® 2007

(Source: International Society for Technology in Education, 2007):

2. Communication and Collaboration

- a. interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts, or others employing a variety of digital environments and media
- b. communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats

5. Digital Citizenship

- a. advocate and practice safe, legal, and responsible use of information and technology
- d. exhibit leadership for digital citizenship