

WHAT IF IT'S NOT ME? SPEAKING UP ABOUT NAME-CALLING



OVERVIEW

This lesson helps students think about what they can do when they witness an incident of name-calling or bullying, but are not being called names or bullied themselves. Having already done some skill-building around the strategies of SAFE (Lesson 3), students will listen to scenarios involving name-calling or bullying, and will both individually and in groups analyze the different ways one might respond.



OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to explain what it means to be a witness or a bystander to bullying or name-calling.

Students will be able to differentiate between times when they can “take a stand” and times when they need to ask an adult for help.

Students will be able to analyze a situation and decide how they might act in order to interrupt the bullying behavior.



AGE/EXPERIENCE LEVEL

Grades 6-12.



THINGS TO PREP & TOOLS NEEDED

Chart paper, markers (at least three colors), response cards handout, copied as needed, scissors, one pair per student, response card suggested scenarios, large drawing paper, crayons/markers/pencils, SAFE handout.



TIME

60-90 minutes (1-2 class periods)

PART 1 – MAKE A HUMAN CHAIN (15-20 MINUTES)

Pose the following questions to students:

- Have you ever seen or heard someone being bullied or called a name?
- If so, how did it feel?

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Give students a few moments to think about the questions, and then give the following instructions for the human chain activity: One at a time we will share our answers to the questions you just heard.

Each person will have up to one minute to answer, and you will decide when it is your turn to share by listening to the answers shared by your classmates. When you hear an answer that is similar to your own or makes you think about something important, you can raise your hand to share your idea next. If more than one person wants to share, we'll figure out the best order, and take turns from there. As each of us shares our answer, we will stand up and link arms with the person who shared before us, and so our class will form a chain of stories about seeing or hearing name-calling and bullying. When someone feels ready to start us off, we will begin.

Engage in this activity with the students; join the chain when it is appropriate. When every student has shared an experience, encourage the class to close up the chain to form a linked circle. Then pose

the following questions and allow time for students to respond:

- How did it feel when you were the only one who saw or heard someone being called names or bullied?
- How does it feel now that you know everyone here has seen or heard something similar?

Introduce the terms “witness” and “bystander” to students, and let them know that we’ve almost all been a witness or bystander to name-calling or bullying at one point or another. Point out to students that one witness or bystander might feel powerless to help, but that linked together with other witnesses or bystanders it is easier to “take a stand” against bullying and name-calling.

PART 2 – GROUP DISCUSSION (10-15 MINUTES)

When students have returned to their seats, ask the following questions and record students’ brainstormed responses on chart paper:

- What can you say or do when you witness name-calling or bullying?
- Is that a SAFE (See Handout).

For responses that students list that are not SAFE, ask students to reconsider another option that isn’t as likely to involve anyone getting hurt (physically or emotionally). Discuss with students that in a bystander situation, the SAFE options for what to do often fall into one of three categories:

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- “Taking a stand” by using words or phrases that interrupt or end the name-calling.
- Asking for help from an adult.
- Ignoring the situation.

Using three different colored markers, ask students to help identify which of the three categories each of the ideas they brainstormed falls into, and color-code them accordingly

Pose the following question to students:

- What happens when a witness or bystander ignores name-calling or bullying?
- Why might someone ignore bullying or name-calling when they see or hear it?

Discuss with students that although ignoring it is sometimes the easiest way to deal with being a witness to name-calling, there are usually other options that are SAFE and don’t allow the teasing to continue.

PART 3 – RESPONSE CARDS (20-30 MINUTES)

Distribute one copy of the Response Cards Handout (attached) to every student, and allow time for students to cut apart the three cards using the dotted guidelines. Then review with the class what action step each of the three cards represents:

Interrupt and Engage

Ask for Help

Not Sure

Explain to students that they will hear a number of different scenarios read aloud one at a time, and that for each scenario they hear it will be their job to decide how they think they might act if they were the witness or bystander in the situation. If students have an idea for how they might interrupt the incident, they should raise the “Interrupt” card. If they feel they might need help in order to stay SAFE in the situation, they should raise the “Ask for Help” card. And if they are not sure what to do, but do not want to just ignore the incident, they should raise the “Not Sure” card.

Begin to read the first scenario, and give students a few moments to digest the story. Then ask students to raise the response card that feels right for them. When students all have their cards raised, direct students to look around and form a group with those who raised the same card. In these groups, students should spend a few minutes discussing why they chose the card they did, and what exactly the options are for action in this scenario. Students who chose the “Not Sure” option can talk about why the scenario seems difficult, and what the pros and cons of each of the other two actions

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(taking a stand or asking for help) might be.

Bring the group back together and process the scenario, giving each group a chance to speak about why they chose the response they did. Help students flesh out some very specific action steps (i.e. tell the person calling names that you don't like the words they are using, go to a playground aide for help, etc.), and record these on chart paper.

Continue with the subsequent scenarios, making sure to communicate to students that there are always multiple ways to deal with any situation involving bullying or name-calling. Emphasize that while there are not "right" answers in this activity, it is important to remember that calling names back or hurting the person doing the teasing is never a SAFE option, and that are always other things that can be done instead.

PART 4 – TRACING FEET (15-20 MINUTES)

To close this lesson, distribute large paper to students and ask them to use a marker or crayon to trace the outline of both of their feet onto the paper. Inform them that these feet represent their own understanding of how to "Interrupt and Engage" as a witness or bystander to bullying or name-calling. Give students time to decorate their outlined feet with words and pictures that represent their ideas about ways to interrupt name-calling. Allow students to share their pieces with the class, and then post the work around the room to represent the class' commitment to not ignoring bullying when they see it happening.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIFFERENTIATION

For lower grade levels

Start the human chain with a story of your own, so as to provide a concrete example of what it's like to witness someone else being called a name.

Ask students to repeat the words "witness" and "bystander" a number of times together, and provide as simple and concrete a definition for these words as possible. Introduce a hand motion to signal the meaning of these words – for example, raise your hand to your forehead to indicate you are looking out for something each time you mention being a witness or bystander.

Emphasize the symbols on the Response Cards Handout, and enact physical cues to accompany these options as well. For example, have students actually stand up when "Interrupt" is their answer. Ask them to raise their hand to indicate they would "Ask for Help." Demonstrate that students can shrug their shoulders when they are "Not Sure" of what to do.

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Run the discussion in Part 3 as a large group activity rather than grouping students to discuss their responses independently. Help draw out why each student responded the way they did, and suggest simple language that summarizes their response in a way that is quick and easy to remember.

Pair students up for the tracing activity so they can trace their partner's feet instead of their own. Ask students to represent in pictures how they might help someone who is being called names or bullied.

For higher grade levels

Allow students to generate the definitions of witness and bystander based on the stories they shared during the human chain activity.

In Part 2, ask students to do the first brainstorming piece on their own before coming back together to share ideas for how one can respond to incidents of name-calling or bullying that one witnesses. During Part 3 of the lesson, ask students to jot down on the back of their response card why they have chosen that response for the scenario prior to raising the card and then grouping up for discussion.

Extend the activity in Part 3 by asking students to toss out some scenarios of their own based on real experiences they've had. Request that students not use the real names of those involved in the incidents they describe. If students choose to share the real outcome of the situation, discuss as a group some very concrete ideas for how the student(s) involved could act if that situation were to arise again.

Encourage students to include a written personal statement in or around the tracing of their feet that summarizes what they think the most important elements of taking a stand against name-calling and bullying are, based on the previous activities and discussion.

Ask students to work in groups or individually on a "Interrupt and Engage" pledge that details how other students who witness bullying or name-calling can act to help solve the problem. Allow students to make short presentations to other classes in the building, asking their peers to sign the pledge to interrupt when they hear or see name-calling in the school. Display signed pledges in a central spot in the school for all to see.

Help students develop their own individual "Quick List" of phrases or statements that they feel comfortable using when they hear or see someone calling names or bullying. Encourage the use of

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“I” statements and assertions of feelings. Allow students to practice using phrases from their “Quick List” in role-plays in which one student acts as the bully, one acts as the victim of the name-calling, and one acts as the bystander and practices taking a stand in a way that feels comfortable to them. Literature suggested for extension of lesson themes (see the Suggested Literature supplement for book descriptions):

Say Something by Peggy Moss (PreK-2)
Play Lady/La Senora Juguetona by Eric Hoffman (PreK-2)
Nobody Knew What to Do by Becky Ray McCain (PreK-2)
Blubber by Judy Blume (3-5)
The Hundred Dresses by Eleanor Estes (3-5)

OTHER LESSONS TO EXPLORE

Learning Empowerment and Self-Identification, Challenging Assumptions, Creating an Anti-Slur Policy, Interrupt and Engage.

TAGS

No Name-Calling Week, identity, anti-bullying.

HANDOUT

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Response Card Suggested Scenarios

SCENARIO #1

Isabelle notices that Jose is sitting by himself in the cafeteria. As she walks by him to find a seat for herself, she hears two other students seated nearby laughing and saying that Jose's lunch is "gross" and that his mom must only know how to cook "stinky food" for her family. Jose keeps on eating, but his head is down. What can Isabelle do?

SCENARIO #2

Darnell and Samuel are both trying to use one of the only open swings on the playground. Both students have one hand on the swing and as Lee walks by he hears Darnell say, "You're too fat for the swing Samuel! It will break if you get on it." Samuel answers by saying he was there first, and Darnell begins to kick sand up and tug at the swing. What can Lee do?

SCENARIO #3

Shelly brings her two dads to parent night to show them around her classroom and to meet her friends and teacher. The next day, Rachel turns to Masha and says she doesn't want to be Shelly's friend anymore because her family is "weird." Shelly comes over to color with Rachel and Masha, and Rachel says "Eew, we don't want any weirdos over here. Go sit somewhere else." What can Masha do?

SCENARIO #4

Raj notices that Lila has been staying behind after school to get help on her math homework. One day Raj stays late too to volunteer in the library, and sees Lila standing outside the school waiting to be picked up. As Raj watches, two older students approach Lila and begin grabbing her homework papers and laughing at the mistakes they see there. One student begins ripping Lila's paper. What can Raj do?

SCENARIO #5

Antonio and Sabine are good friends, and sit together every day on the bus to and from school. Shomi sometimes sits near them, but has stopped recently because a group of students who also ride the bus have started sitting behind Antonio and Sabine and throwing balls of paper and other garbage at them for the whole ride. Shomi also hears the group calling Antonio gay and saying Sabine must really be a boy because otherwise she would have friends who are girls. What can Shomi do?

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HANDOUT 2 Staying Safe

If you are being called names or bullied, remember the four ways to stay SAFE:

Say what you feel

Ask for help

Find a friend

Exit the area

What does SAFE mean?

1. **Say what you feel:** Telling a person who is teasing you or calling you names the way that their words or actions make you feel can be a great way to let that person know that you don't like what they are doing. You can start your sentence by saying something like "When you say/do _____ to me, it makes me feel _____. " Being angry or sad when someone is bullying you is ok, and it is ok to let that person (or someone else) know what you are going through.
2. **Ask for help:** Sometimes you can handle name-calling and bullying yourself (possibly by using one of the other SAFE strategies). But sometimes you need to ask for help, and that's ok. If a person who is calling you names is making you feel scared that you might get hurt, you can talk to a teacher or other adult about what is going on. Asking for help is not about tattling – it's about taking care of yourself and staying safe.
3. **Find a friend:** Some people who call names or bully others like to pick times and places when no one else is around because it makes them feel safer. That's why sometimes you can end a bullying situation just by finding another person or people to be around or spend time with. Hanging out with people who make you feel good about yourself is important, and the person calling names might think twice before picking on you when you're with your friends.
4. **Exit the area:** While it might feel like you aren't doing anything at all, sometimes walking away from someone who is picking on you is the best way to end things. Some people who tease want you to get upset, and while it's perfectly normal to feel hurt, angry or sad if you are being called names, sticking around the person hurting you may just make things worse. So, if you can, find a way to exit the area where the teasing is happening.

DID YOU PARTICIPATE IN THIS ACTIVITY? TELL US HOW IT WENT AND WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN BETTER!
EMAIL US AT EDUCATORS@GLSEN.ORG.