



The Society for Safe & Caring Schools & Communities
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Supporting a Safe and Caring School— Assembly Script 8 for Secondary Schools

Dealing With Bullying Behaviour



Note to Principals:

These scripts are designed to be used in assemblies as introduction to the topics in the Safe and Caring Schools Program. The Principal takes a key role in delivering the message in the assembly.

Please read over each script before implementing. You are welcome to adapt the script to suit your school audience.

Assembly Script 8—Topic 4B Dealing With Bullying Behaviour

Objectives

This assembly script has the following outcomes:

- to develop in students an understanding of bullying
- to demonstrate to students methods of responding to bullying behaviour

Materials Required

- a sound system for CD of music (optional)
- an overhead projector and screen
- Posters for the “Myths” section of the presentation
- A length of rope for the “Ropes ‘n Rights” Activity

Optional Materials

The following pamphlets are available from The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities:

Beyond Bullying: What You Can Do to Help

Bullying and Harassment: Everybody’s Problem

Introduction

As students gather for the assembly an appropriate song may be played to introduce this month’s topic. The Principal should welcome and greet the students as usual for assemblies.

The Principal should briefly review any activities that the school had last month to recognize the last topic—Managing Anger

Say: Last month we worked on skills to help us manage anger more effectively. Learning how to control negative emotions is important to building a safe and caring community. This month we want to focus on a topic that is essential if we are going to all feel safe, cared for and included in any community—how we respond to bullying behaviour.

Put up OH 1—*Bullying*

Say: Most of us are familiar with the first part of this overhead—the definition of bullying. We know that it involves intimidating or harassing someone. However, we may not think of some of these other behaviours as bullying. Any behaviour that harms the self respect of another person, or makes a person feel unsafe or hurt, is bullying behaviour. This is behaviour we want to eliminate from our school community.

Put up OH 2—*Statistics About Bullying.*

Have staff members or students read out the information, giving a different voice to each statistic. Another way to deliver this information is to have the statistics written on poster paper and have them presented to the students that way.

Say: I want you to know the facts about bullying. We need to decide, as a school community, that we are not going to be in the 85% that watches while someone is being bullied. We need to recognize that bullying not only harms the victim, but the bully and the community as well.

For the next session on Myths About Bullying, have staff members prepared to participate. One staff member, carrying a card that says “Myth #____ should state the Myth. Another staff member should read/state the response.

Involving more staff members will send a clear message to students that bullying behaviour is something that is the responsibility of all members of the school community. Student leaders could also participate in this activity.

Say: Sometimes, people have ideas about bullying that are not accurate. These myths can get in the way of our responding to bullying. Listen carefully as we examine the myths, and the truth.

Myth 1: He/she has got to learn to stand up for himself/herself.

- **students who finally complain about being bullied have usually reached the end of the rope. They are saying they have tried, and they can’t cope with the situation. They are looking for help.**

Myth 2: He/she should hit back, only harder.

- **This is an invitation to serious harm. Not only does it teach children that violence will solve problems, but, in many cases, the people who bully are bigger and more powerful than the victims.**

Myth 3: It builds character.

- **People who are bullied have been shown to have low self-esteem and learn not to trust other people.**

Myth 4: Sticks and stones can break your bones but names will never hurt you.

- **Scars left by name-calling can last a lifetime.**

Myth 5: That’s not bullying. They’re just teasing.

- **Teasing is not fun for the victim. It hurts and should be stopped**

Myth 6: There have always been people who bully and there always will be so let it go.

- **By working together as parents, teachers and students we have the power to change how things have been. We can create a better future for our children.**

Myth 7: Kids will be kids. (Boys will be boys).

- **It is not natural for a child to bully. It is learned behaviour. Children may be imitating aggressive behaviour they have seen in the movies without considering the effect in real life. (We discussed this way back in Session 1, Topic 1, on Violence.)**

Say: As the adults in our school community, we want all students to know that we will take action if we hear about bullying in any form—not just physical, but verbal harassment as well. Here’s some additional information that may help you to understand how important it is to respond to bullying when you see it or to tell someone in authority.

Put up OH 3—*Peer Influence*.

Say: I have another activity I’d like to share with you to help remind you of how important it is to respond when you see or know about a peer being bullied.

Activity—Rope ‘N Rights

You will need along length of nylon rope for this activity.

Have a small teacher act as the “victim”. Ask him or her to remove his/her shoes. (They need to be in stocking feet.) Ask the volunteer to hold to one end of the rope.

Select a larger teacher and ask him/her to hold the other end of the rope. Explain that the small person represents our victim and the larger person represents a person who bullies. The rope represents the small person’s rights.

On your instruction, ask both people to pull on the rope as in a tug-o-war. Likely, the small person will slide across the floor.

Next, ask the small person to ask two or three people from the group to help him/her. These people represent the “trusted adults”. Move the small person closer to the middle of the rope and place the other people behind him/her. Again, pull on the rope. This time, the bully should be the one pulled across.

The point—asking others to help when a person feels intimidated or bullied is the best way to overcome intimidation.

Say: Don’t let another person’s rights be pulled away by a bully. As a school community, we can work together to make sure that everyone’s rights are respected in a safe and caring school.

Thank the participants and close the assembly according to the usual procedure.

Follow-Up Classroom Activities

1. Teachers should follow up the assembly with a discussion in classrooms about the presence of bullying in the school. Where is it most likely to occur? What could be done by the school to prevent it? What actions would the students like to see taken?
2. Read the letter from the *Lethbridge Herald* to students and discuss their feelings and responses to it.
3. Show the video *Bully Dance* (available from the National Film Board 1-800-267-7710 or www.nfb.ca)
4. Have students make “anti-bullying” posters with key ideas from the assembly to post in the school.
5. Take to students about how they can intervene to make peace when they see bullying occurring.

This letter appeared in the ***Letters to the Editor*** in the **Lethbridge Herald**, in December, 2000.

Editor:

I write this because of the recent attention being given to bullying in our schools.

I applaud those who are brining this ongoing problem to the forefront. The events of Littleton, Colorado and Taber, and the horrific beating death of a 14 year old in Edmonton show very graphically and tragically what can happen as a result of the constant bullying and harassing some students

When I was in school, I witnessed some type of bullying daily. Though I wasn't directly involved in the bullying or harassment of fellow students, I was an accomplice by inaction and silence. I did nothing to stop it.

I watched as students who did nothing to deserve this treatment, other than being short and fat or tall and skinny or too smart or not smart enough or from a poor family or any other reason that made them "not fit in" being treated like lower class citizens. They were tormented and beat up on a daily basis because of their differences. And I did nothing.

I did not realize until years after school how we (I include my fellow silent students, not just the bullies) effectively destroyed the self confidence and self esteem of those few unfortunates. I am sure that no matter how successful or "well adjusted" they may be as adults, the emotional scars are there for life. It is a guilt and regret I will carry with me forever.

So, I implore students that are witnessing the same things as I did on a daily basis, please do not remain silent.

Tell someone. Tell a teacher, a counsellor or your parents. I don't care who, just tell someone who may be able to change the situation. Don't turn a blind eye as I did. Don't be an accomplice to the bullying by saying nothing.

You are not being a squealer or a rat or a tattletale or whatever you call it. You will be doing the right thing. Tell someone.

**Don Forster
Lethbridge, Alberta**

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is exposure, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more people.

Bullying may be physical, verbal or psychological, including:

- **Physical contact**
- **Words**
- **Facial expressions, gestures**
- **Intentional exclusion**
- **Hurtful imbalances of power**
- **Name calling**
- **Put downs**
- **Property damage and/or threat**
- **Circulation of unkind rumours**
- **Manipulative “friendships”**
- **Racial slurs**
- **Sexual slurs**

The Facts About Bullying

10% of school aged children are bullies.

20% of school-aged children are bullied.

Most children are bystanders in bullying situations. In 85% of bullying episodes, peers are present.

60% of boys who were characterized as bullies in Grades 6—9 have been convicted of at least one crime by age 24.

Peer Influence

- **85 percent of bullying occurs outside the range of adults, but peers observe 85 percent.**

- **When peers take action to stop the bullying or to suggest lack of support, the bullying stops within 10 seconds, 57 percent of the time.**

- **A study undertaken by the Victoria Police showed that if bullying was reported early, the bully was highly unlikely to retaliate (get even). If it was not reported, the victim was likely to be victimized in the future.**