Cyberbullying: Be Upstanding

Essential Question: How do you judge the intentions and impact of people's words and actions online?

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

Estimated time: 45 minutes

Materials

• **Why Care? 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**

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

teaching plans

Introduce

REVIEW the Key Vocabulary terms bystander, upstander, and empathize 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.

ASK
- *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?* (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 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.

Homework

Students create four new Chart It scenarios with their parents. Students bring home the **You Chart It Student Handout** they completed during class. They explain what the axes mean, and create and plot four scenarios – one for each quadrant. The scenarios should illustrate behavior that is hurtful/intentional, hurtful/unintentional, helpful/intentional, and helpful/unintentional.

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

Why Care?

Name(s) _____ **Class** _____ **Date** _____

Directions

Read this scenario about Kevin and José and answer the questions below.

Kevin sends his friend José a short video he made at home, a reenactment of a famous fantasy movie scene. José, laughing at how Kevin looks, shows it to some other boys at school. The boys laugh at Kevin too, and then decide to post it on a video-sharing website. Millions of people then view Kevin's video. Nasty comments are posted. Every day, Kevin goes online to check the site and sees more comments like "idiot" and "fat nerd." Every day, he goes to school and hears similar cruel comments from his classmates.

Who are the bystanders? _____

What would you do if you were a bystander? _____

_____

What would you say to José if you wanted him to stop? _____

_____

What would you say to Kevin or do for him to show your support for him?

_____

_____

What could you say to the other kids at school who viewed the video and left cruel comments?

_____

_____

How could you have involved a trusted adult?

_____

_____

Why Care?

Don't Be a Bystander

In this true story, many people contributed to the cyberbullying. But there were many more kids who knew about the situation but chose not to get involved. Kids who are not cyberbullying but who see, hear, or know about it are called bystanders. In this situation, kids in school who witnessed the abuse and kids online who viewed the video were bystanders.

Use Common Sense!

Be an upstander! If you witness cyberbullying, you can help by supporting the target and letting the bullies know that their behavior is not acceptable. Here are things you can do:

• Step in to help in a cyberbullying situation by letting the target know you are there for them.

• Listen to and empathize with the target.

• Do not spread rumors; instead, tell the cyberbully to stop.

• Report what is happening to a trusted adult or website administrator, or encourage the target to tell a trusted adult. A trusted adult is someone who you believe will listen and has the skills, desire, and authority to help you.

Name _____   **Class** _____   **Date** _____

1. An upstander is someone who:

a) Takes action and stands up for someone who is being cyberbullied

b) Goes along with what a cyberbully is doing because of peer pressure

c) Ignores what a cyberbully is doing

2. Lali tells Gloria that she keeps receiving mean messages on her cell phone. "That must make you feel awful," Gloria says. "Do you want to talk about it?" True or false: Gloria is showing Lali empathy.

a) True

b) False

3. Alina notices that a classmate keeps posting rude comments about her friend Mike on a blog. What could Alina do to become an upstander?

a) Show Mike support

b) Ask her classmate to delete the posts

c) Both a and b

1. An upstander is someone who:

a) Takes action and stands up for someone who is being cyberbullied

b) Goes along with what a cyberbully is doing because of peer pressure

c) Ignores what a cyberbully is doing

Answer feedback
The correct answer is **a**. An upstander is someone who helps a target when they see cyberbullying occur.

2. Lali tells Gloria that she keeps receiving mean messages on her cell phone. "That must make you feel awful," Gloria says. "Do you want to talk about it?" True or false: Gloria is showing Lali empathy.

a) True

b) False

Answer feedback
The correct answer is **a**, True. When you empathize with someone, you try to understand how that person might be feeling.

3. Alina notices that a classmate keeps posting rude comments about her friend Mike on a blog. What could Alina do to become an upstander?

a) Show Mike support

b) Ask her classmate to delete the posts

c) Both a and b

Answer feedback
The correct answer is **c**. An upstander tries to make things better for a target of cyberbullying.

Common Sense on Connected Culture

Some Facts

- Almost 80 percent of teens own a cell phone (Nielsen, 2009)
- About 4 out of 10 teens ages 13 to 17 experienced some type of cyberbullying in the previous year (Harris Interactive, 2007)
- About three-quarters of kids 12-17 say they have helped others while gaming (Pew, 2008)

Overview of Issue

We are all part of communities. Our schools, our towns, our hobbies or interests all form the centers around which we connect with other people. These communities all have codes of behavior (written or unwritten) that help everyone get along. But in today's 24/7 digital world, we are also part of online communities. And these communities connect us to people we may not know. They connect us in ways where we are known only by screen name, or where we are anonymous. They connect us to people who are sometimes very far away. Whether we're reading or writing an online restaurant review, posting something on a Facebook page, texting a friend, or sharing a picture on a photo website, we're participating in a world where we can be instantly connected to thousands of people at a moment's notice.

Why It Matters

When our kids connect to each other either from a distance or through a screen name, it can impact the way they behave. Actions can be free from discovery or consequences. When something happens anonymously, it's easier for people to behave irresponsibly, cruelly, or unethically. Kids benefit from a code of conduct for online and mobile activity just as they need a code of conduct in the real world. They should be empowered to be good digital citizens, in addition to being good citizens in general. Our kids are creating online communities with every click of the mouse or text they send. And they will have to live in those communities. The information they post about themselves or others will last a long time and travel great distances. So parents and teachers need to help kids think about the consequences of their online actions. Kids should learn that how they behave when they are connected really matters to them, their friends, and to the broader communities they participate in. Finally, there's a great deal at stake. When kids misuse online or mobile technology to harass, embarrass, or bully others, they can do real and lasting harm.

common sense says

Connected culture can be positive or negative – it's what people make it. When guiding our kids, it's important for them to understand that they have a choice in all of their online relationships. They can say something positive or say something mean. They can create great community support around activities or interests, or they can misuse the public nature of online communities to tear others down.

Common Sense on Connected Culture

Talk about cyberbullying: It's real. It's everywhere. And remember that kids sometimes will tell you about a friend's problems rather than their own experiences. Make sure your kids know how to deal with a cyberbully, and that if the situation gets serious, urge them to tell a trusted adult about it.

Give kids a cyberbullying vocabulary. Talk about bullies, victims, bystanders (those who witness offensive behavior but don't do anything to stop it), and upstanders (people who actively try to stop cyberbullying). It will help them understand what roles they play or could play.

Encourage positive posting. Are your kids fans of YouTube? Have they said something encouraging about something they've seen and loved? Have they added knowledge to a wiki or shared their experience on a hobby or interest site? From the earliest ages, kids need to know they can add positively to the online world.

Remind kids that texts and IMs may not persist, but they still have impact. Anything they say or do with their phones or through quick messages may seem to disappear when the devices shut down, but the impact on others remains – whether for good or bad.

Tell kids to apply the Golden Rule online. If kids wouldn't say something to someone's face, then they shouldn't text it, Skype it, tweet it, Facebook it, IM it, or post it.