

# Conflict Resolution in Schools

Guide for Educators in South Africa

Booklet 2

# BULLYING

**Topics in this booklet:**

- Analysis, strategies and techniques for dealing with bullying in schools
- Lesson plans on bullying





# Conflict Resolution in Schools

Notes

## Guide for Educators in South Africa

### Booklet 2 - Bullying

#### Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Bullying:</b> Introduction to Bullying Behaviour .....	1
<b>Class Lesson 1:</b> Bullying .....	6
<b>Exercise:</b> What is Bullying? .....	7
<b>Class Lesson 2:</b> Who is the Bully? .....	8
<b>Exercise:</b> Who is the Bully? .....	11
<b>Class Lesson 3:</b> Stand Up for Yourself .....	12
<b>Class Lesson 4:</b> Stopping the Bullying .....	17
<b>Learner Information Sheet</b> .....	19
<b>Further Resources</b> .....	Inside Back Cover



## Bullying

### Introduction to Bullying Behaviour

Bullying is about one person (or a group) doing or saying things to have power over another person.

Bullying behaviour is repeated incidents involving:

- A bigger, stronger, better educated or more powerful child and a smaller or weaker child, or
- A group of children and a single child.

Bullying can be broken into two categories: **Direct bullying**, and **indirect bullying**, which is also known as social aggression.

**Direct bullying** involves physical aggression such as hitting, punching, slapping, kicking, stabbing, choking, scratching, biting, hair pulling, tripping up, shoving and poking. It also includes stealing or damaging of belongings.

**Social aggression** or **indirect bullying** involves forcing the victim into social isolation. This isolation is achieved through a wide variety of techniques, including the spreading of gossip, leaving the learner out or refusing to socialise, bullying other people who wish to socialise with the learner, and criticising manner of dress and other socially-significant markers (including race, religion, disability etc).

Other more subtle forms of indirect bullying include verbal bullying, such as name calling (including racial, gender and sexuality slurs), ignoring the target or leaving them out, arguing others into submission, manipulation, gossip, spreading rumours and lies, staring, giggling, laughing and mocking.

One of the fastest growing types of bullying is bullying via the internet and cell phones (particularly abusive SMS's).

Norwegian Researcher, Dan Olweus, defines bullying as when a person "is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons." He defines negative action as "when a person intentionally inflicts injury or discomfort upon another person, through physical contact, through words or in other ways."

Bullying in all its forms is unacceptable, and schools should have clear anti-bullying policies and strategies.

### Why Do Some People Bully?

There are a lot of reasons why some people bully others. Some may feel a strong need to control or dominate. They may see it as a way of making themselves look tough and in charge, or of being popular. Some do it to try and mask a deficit in social skills. Other bullies do it to get attention or things, or to make other people afraid of them. Others might be jealous of the person they are bullying, as envy and resentment are sometimes cited as reasons. They may have been bullied themselves (or are still being bullied).

Other traits of bullies include: quickness to anger, use of force, addiction to aggressive behaviours, mistaking others'

actions as hostile, concern with preserving self image, and engaging in obsessive or rigid actions.

Some bullies may not even understand how wrong their behaviour is and how it makes the person being bullied feel. If aggressive behaviour is not challenged in childhood there is a danger that it will become habitual. Research indicates that bullying during childhood puts children at risk of engaging in criminal behaviour and domestic violence in adulthood.

### Why Are Some People Bullied?

Some learners are bullied for no particular reason, but sometimes it's because they are different in some way - perhaps through the colour of their skin, the way they talk, their appearance, their size or their name. Sometimes young people are bullied because they look as though they won't stand up for themselves - bullies like easy targets.

Learners may be bullied because of:

- Weight;
- Looks;
- Hair colour;
- Their family;
- Their schoolwork;
- If they are popular;
- If they work hard;
- If they have a disability;
- If they are from a different religion, colour or culture;
- If they wear spectacles or a hearing aid;
- If they have dyslexia or dyspraxia;
- If they've been off school due to illness.



Learners are most often bullied during their first few years of primary school, and then again in the first few years of high school, when they are feeling 'new' and vulnerable.

### Boy Bullying

The victim is often quiet and inoffensive and lacking confidence. This may lead to him being called gay, particularly if he is also popular with girls. Younger boys tend to be targeted with violence in the playground, which is often laughed off as horseplay while older ones can be targeted during sports lessons when there is little supervision in the changing room.

Bullied boys often find themselves being ridiculed and made

the butt of jokes. This can be particularly hurtful when their friends join in. Boys are often reluctant to report bullying as they feel this to be a sign of weakness, and that they should be able to handle it themselves.

Boys are more often bullied by a single individual.

### Girl Bullying

Girl bullies are often motivated by jealousy. Friendships can be volatile and a temporary falling out can quickly escalate. Sometimes the girl victim is a former friend, who is suddenly excluded from school and social events. Rumours and hurtful gossip can be spread and the victim is deliberately isolated, spending break on her own and having nobody to partner her in class.

Girls are more often bullied by groups.

If she's a teenager she may get abusive text messages (including death threats) or she might be called names (for example, alleging she is gay). She may harm herself and conceal the fact by being reluctant to change her clothes for sports activities.

### Effects

Some people think that bullying is part of growing up and a way for young people to learn to stand up for themselves, but bullying can have serious consequences. It makes young people feel lonely, unhappy and frightened. It makes them feel unsafe and think that there must be something wrong with them. They lose confidence and may skip school to escape being bullied.

The effects of bullying can be serious and even fatal. People who are bullied are at risk of stress related illness, which can sometimes lead to suicide.

### Advice to Learners Being Bullied

Learners should be given the following advice.

If you are being bullied, you can do something about it. You *can* make a difference!

- TELL, TELL, TELL;
- Practise what you want to say;
- Keep a note or diary of what is happening;
- Ask your parents to visit the school;
- Talk over what to do with a friend, an educator, your mom or dad or someone you trust;
- It is right to tell an adult that you are being bullied and to ask for their help. But you don't have to let them take over. You can discuss with them about what you would like to happen, and then make your own choice;
- If your school has a system of peer mediation: report your problem to your class monitor, a learner mediator or CR (conflict resolution) educator –



they will be sympathetic and trained to deal with your problem;

- Involving bystanders is a very important aspect of tackling bullying because there are always people who know what is going on. Young people regularly report that they are not bullied but are afraid of being bullied because they've seen it happening to others.
- Don't give up.

### Educators Receiving Complaints of Bullying

Educators have a vital and responsible role to play in responding correctly when learners report bullying. When dealing with someone who is being bullied it is important to remember that they may be very upset, although they may not show it on the outside. If they have plucked up the courage to talk to you then they need to know you will take the problem seriously. Educators must listen carefully and sympathetically when a child tells them about being bullied.

How you react and respond to that learner may make the difference between resolving the issue and allowing misery to continue that could affect the rest of their school life and beyond.

Such a matter should always be discussed in private, out of earshot of other learners. This allows the victim to feel safe and will stop anyone seeing or hearing what is being discussed.

If the victim of bullying finds it difficult to talk about their problem, they can be asked to draw a picture or write a poem about the effect bullying has had. Some learners find it easier to communicate in more creative ways. This approach then enables the educator to use the picture or poem as a way to ask questions and elicit the truth.

Reassure the learner that you will take the complaint seriously and that you will look into it. It's a good idea to ask the learner to write down exactly what happened and who was there so that you can speak to other people. The more information you have the better you will be able to deal with the problem and the faster you can assess exactly what happened.

## Learner Information Sheet

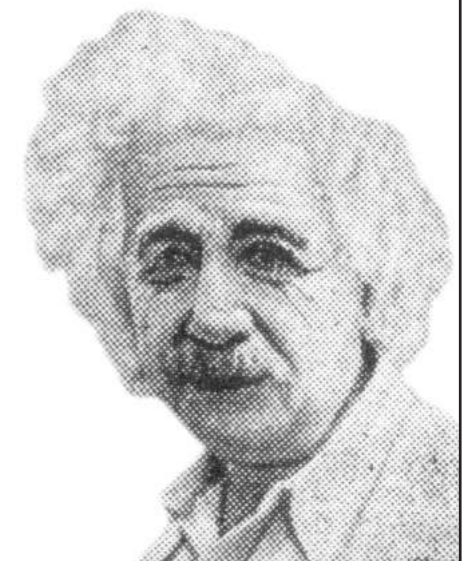
### Handout for Learners

### Twenty-Two Ways of Dealing with Bullies

- If your school has a conflict resolution system, tell your class monitor or a school mediation member;
- Tell an adult (teacher, headmaster, parent, relative etc.);
- Tell your classmates and friends;
- Ignore them (don't react, fold your arms and say nothing, pretend you don't care or pretend you can't see or hear them);
- Tell them they are bullying;
- Avoid them (stay away from them, don't talk to them);
- Make other friends (team up with others, walk with a friend or group of friends);
- Tell them how you feel;
- Use assertive body language;
- Control yourself (stay 'cool', use self-control);
- Be prepared with something to say;
- Confront them (say 'stop it!', ask them to go away);
- Believe in yourself, no matter what they say or do (stand up for yourself, don't take unwanted comments);
- Befriend them (try to sort it out, ask them to play, try to see things from their point of view etc.);
- Laugh it off (treat it as a joke, try to make the bully laugh);
- Change your situation (change class, change schools);
- Change how you think about it (don't take it seriously, feel sorry for the bully);
- Distract yourself (stop thinking about it, do something else, watch TV etc.);
- Don't do things you don't want to (refuse and keep repeating your point of view);
- Don't let the bully get through to you (be vague in your responses to the bully, e.g. 'that's nice', yes, that's what you think?' without letting hurtful remarks penetrate);
- Distract them (change the subject);
- Don't annoy them on purpose.

*“Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding.”*

Albert Einstein



It is debatable whether tell strategies are appropriate here, as the gang (or perceived gang) has done nothing (except look tough). If they approach you, then this is a different circumstance, requiring different strategies.

#### *A bully is always pushing and shoving you*

This type of repeated physical bullying should be dealt with. It is necessary to tell others (especially adults). The school must be notified (teacher or head). You could also tell classmates and friends, and walk with others where possible.

Other appropriate strategies would include assertiveness, self-control, self-belief, confront them, be prepared with something to say, tell them what they are doing and how you feel about it.

#### *A bully is spreading rumours about you*

Spreading rumours behind your back is a cowardly form of bullying. In this case, it may be useful to confront them, after carefully preparing what to say.

Other appropriate strategies would include assertiveness, self-control, self-belief, tell them what they are doing and how you feel about it, laugh it off, or change how you think about it. You would also want to tell classmates and friends, to ensure that they did not believe the rumours.

#### *A bully gets you alone and threatens you*

Much would depend on the nature of the bully and the nature of the threat (is his/her threat genuine and does it include physical violence?).

Different strategies would be applicable if the threat appears genuine.

Appropriate strategies would include: assertiveness, self-control, self-belief, and telling others. Adults, including teachers, should be told. Also, it would be wise to warn classmates and friends.

#### *A bully says he will hit you if you don't let him copy your homework*

This is a threat of injury, and should be taken seriously.

You would need to behave assertively, stay calm and collected, maintain self-belief, refuse categorically, and then tell an adult. The school must be notified (teacher or head). Furthermore, it would be wise to warn classmates and friends.

#### *A bully takes your school bag and throws your belongings all over the school grounds*

This represents misappropriation of your property. It is also a threatening act. Appropriate strategies would include: assertiveness, self-control, self-belief, and telling others.

Adults, including teachers, should be told. Also, it would be wise to warn classmates and friends.

Much would depend on who the bully was – for example, if it was a friend or former friend, you would not take it so seriously. Then again, you may well decide not to tell. Instead you could tell them what they are doing and how you feel about it (also with assertiveness, self-control, and self-belief).

#### *A bully keeps following you into the toilet, and trying to push your head into the toilet bowl*

This is another repeated physical assault, although it may not cause physical harm.

It is necessary to tell others (especially adults).

The school must be notified (teacher or head). You could also tell classmates and friends, and ask a friend to walk with you to the toilets where possible. Other appropriate strategies would include assertiveness, self-control, self-belief, confront them, be prepared with something to say, and/or tell them that this is a physical assault.

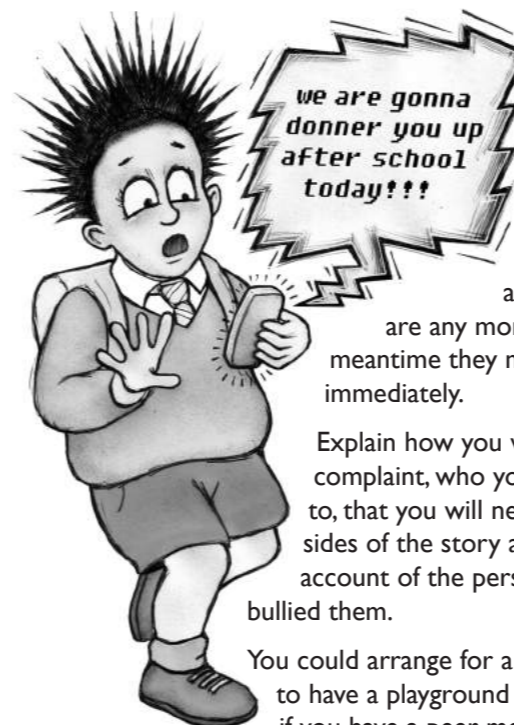
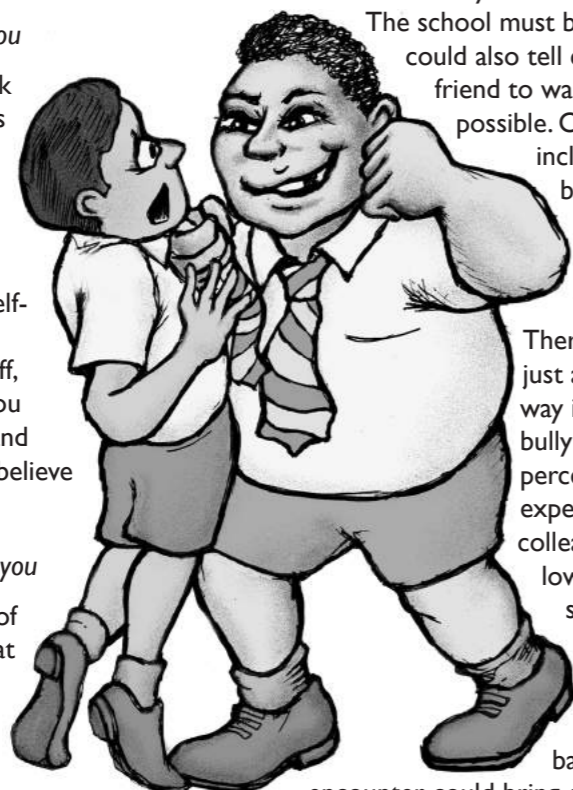
The above are just suggestions. There will be other answers which are just as valid. Much will depend on the way in which the learners perceive the bullying situation. In some cases, their perception will be based on their own experiences, or those of friends and colleagues. Thus, it is important to allow them to put forward their own suggested strategies, and to work through the implications of these critically and methodically.

The real fear of bullying victims is based on the thought that the next encounter could bring even worse treatment at the hands of the bully. If this fear is replaced by the development of appropriate strategies, it becomes rational (and positive) instead of irrational (and negative). This fear is the reason why most bullying victims are not able to just change their perception of the bullying – indeed, this may be unwise in any cases of serious bullying (as action to deal with the bullying is needed, rather than a 'head in the sand' negation of the facts).

As can be seen above, the following strategies are widely applicable in dealing with bullies: assertiveness, self-control, and self-belief. These useful strategies/skills are covered in separate lessons.

In all serious cases of bullying it is also vital that targeted learners tell adults, especially their teacher(s).

See also the background information on bullying.



Assure the victim that you will be back in touch with them as soon as you have completed your investigation and that if there are any more problems in the meantime they must let you know immediately.

Explain how you will investigate the complaint, who you will be talking to, that you will need to hear both sides of the story as well as the account of the person they say has bullied them.

You could arrange for a bullied learner to have a playground buddy/friend or, if you have a peer mediation system, the CR class monitor or CR mediators

should also be informed and asked to help.

If learners complain that particular areas of school are unsafe – for instance the toilets or isolated parts of the school playground or buildings – staff could set up extra patrols.

When a learner tells you that they are being bullied it is important to gather all the facts from both sides. This includes talking to the bully and any witnesses.

Bullies will often not act alone and it is important to remember that you may be dealing with a number of learners who are friends and who may give similar versions of events that differ from that of the victim.

Boys and girls bully in different ways but both are skilled manipulators, often lying their way out of situations and turning the tables on their victim. It is common for problems in the community between neighbours and relatives to spill over into school disputes.

You will know from your own experience of the learners who are friends with whom and can use this as a way of assessing the accuracy of what you are being told. Try to interview the learner accused of bullying in such a way that they do not have the opportunity to get together to make up stories.

Explain to the learner accused of bullying what they are supposed to have done and get them to write down exactly what they think happened, who was there and what led up to the incident. The bully may admit the event occurred but it is worthwhile getting them to write it down anyway so you can talk to them about it in more detail later.

Ask them what their friends were doing while the incident was taking place and whether any other learners or adults were nearby.

Bullies rarely admit what they have done so just because the bullies may be 'nice' children, high achievers, or from

good families does not mean that they are not bullying someone else.

## Dealing with Bullying

How you deal with bullying will depend on the school policy and systems (see below).

Once you have all the facts and have established that bullying has taken place you will need to decide how to proceed and what punishments are suitable. Much depends on the nature of the bullying.

You must explain to the learner that what they have done constitutes bullying and explain the school's policy on bullying (e.g. zero tolerance).

If it includes violence then you need to report this to the CR team and the school head.

Schools should consider calling in the police over violence where the attacker is over the age of criminal responsibility.

Examples of bullying which could be a criminal offence include: -

- Assault: Hitting, punching or kicking;
- Harassment: Continual name calling, making abusive phone calls, posting abuse on the internet or sending threatening SMS's.

Explain to the bully why their actions were wrong and help them to understand that these actions could land them in trouble with the police later in life.

It is appropriate in cases where bullying is persistent, for the bully's parents or carers be called in to school.

Not all parents are horrified to learn of their child's behaviour and some may think their child is simply standing up for themselves. They may even be carrying out the parents' advice to 'hit back'.

## Bullying Policies

All schools should have a bullying policy. It is recommended that this involves a firm 'zero tolerance' message and approach.

There is no reason why badly behaved and disruptive learners should be allowed to terrorise other learners. Possible sanctions for dealing with this problem include: -

- A warning (with supervision);
- Detention;
- Internal exclusion within school;
- Temporary exclusion from school;
- Permanent exclusion from school.

Schools should make it clear they are 'telling schools' where learners are encouraged to report incidents so that even if the victim is too frightened to say anything the bully will know they cannot get away with abusive behaviour.

## School Strategies to Reduce Bullying

One of the responsibilities of members of a school CR team is that they need to help the victims of bullying. The following strategies may be considered: -

- If a person voluntarily comes to someone for help then they need to listen. Sometimes this is all that the victim wants and needs;
- After investigating the situation, it may be that intervention is necessary with the bully or bullies. The situation needs to be addressed and hopefully a resolution to the problem can be found;
- Inform the parents of the victim and of the bully. Discuss possible solutions with them. Arrange a meeting with them if possible;
- Follow up in communicating with the victim, the parents and the educators about the situation;
- Monitor the behaviour of the bully and the safety of the victim on a school-wide basis;
- Teach children how to stand up to bullies and learn how to defend themselves;
- Persuade the school to introduce other school-wide interventions (see below for details).

Researchers have suggested several strategies which address ways to help reduce bullying which include:

- Find out how much bullying goes on in your school. Get together with other educators and learners (the CR team, if your school has one) to organise a questionnaire about bullying (you can make sure that no-one

reads the individual answers by putting them in a locked box). Once you have received all the answers, you can write up a short report for everyone to read;

- Make sure your school has a good selection of anti-bullying books and other information in its library;
- Develop a school anti-bullying policy, and make sure that everybody knows about it;
- Make it clear that bullying is never acceptable at your school;
- Get everyone in your school involved in tackling bullying, not just the educators, but other learners, tuck shop ladies and playground assistants;
- Hold a school anti-bullying week;
- Hold assemblies and discussions in class about bullying - classes could produce posters, pictures, poems, stories, plays which could be shared with the rest of the school;
- Hold a workshop or school conference day devoted to bully/victim problems;
- Increase adult supervision in the playground, hallways and washrooms more vigilantly, especially at break times;
- Emphasise caring, respect and safety;
- Emphasise consequences of hurting others;
- Enforce consistent and immediate consequences for aggressive behaviour;
- Follow up on all instances of aggression;
- Improve communication among school administrators, educators, parents and learners;
- Have a school problem box where kids can report problems or concerns and offer suggestions;
- Teach co-operative learning activities;
- Help bullies with anger control and the development of empathy;
- Encourage positive peer relations;
- Offer a variety of extracurricular activities which appeal to a range of interests.



## Class Lesson 4: Stopping the Bullying

### Objectives

To help learners to:

- Become familiar with a range of strategies for dealing with bullying;
- Understand that different strategies are appropriate on different occasions and with different people;
- Begin the process of critically examining the suitability of various strategies.

### Age/level

Appropriate for ages 8 and above

### Duration

One lesson

### Materials

Twenty-two cards with one of the suggested strategies (see page 19 below) written on each.

(If your school does not have a conflict resolution procedure, then leave out the first strategy on the list, making a total of twenty-one strategies.)

### Procedure

Place the large cards on the wall around the room, so that they can be easily seen and the learners can stand near them.

(An alternative – if there is not enough space - is to group strategies that are similar).

Read the following situations in turn, asking learners to think carefully about what strategy they would use in each situation then to go and stand near to the relevant card.

- A bully says: "Give me your cell phone!";
- A bully is calling you names;
- A gang of tough-looking learners comes towards you;
- A bully is always pushing and shoving you;
- A bully is spreading rumours about you;
- A bully gets you alone and threatens you;
- A bully says he will stab you if you don't let him copy your homework;
- A bully takes your school bag and throws your belongings all over the school grounds;
- A bully keeps following you into the toilet, and trying to dunk your head in the bowl;

Encourage learners to think for themselves - not to go where their friends go, unless they agree. Individual learners will be asked to explain their choice, so they need to be sure of their reasons.

After each question, when all the learners have gathered by cards, select some to explain their choice. Ask a few learners who are standing at a card/cards that are a good choice to explain, but also ask any that you think are: -

- Not making sound choices for some reason
- Following their friends
- Unsure what to do!

Work through the likely outcome of some of the selected strategies with the learners, so they understand how to evaluate their options.

Ensure that the message comes across that different strategies are suitable for different people and different circumstances.

Also that there may be no ideal strategy – sometimes the person being bullied will need to try a range of strategies before combating the bullying. The important thing is not to give up – to determine to beat the bullying, and to try different strategies until this is achieved.

See also 'Issues to Explore'.

### Issues to Explore

In every case of bullying, if your school has a conflict resolution system, it is best to tell your class monitor. In more serious cases, a school CR mediator and a CR-trained teacher should also be advised.

*A bully says: "Give me your cell phone!"?*

If the bully wants to take the cell phone (and not just to use it), this is attempted theft, so should be treated seriously.

You would need to behave assertively, stay calm and collected, refuse categorically, and then tell an adult. The school must be notified (teacher or head). Also, it would be wise to warn classmates and friends.

*A bully is calling you names*

Much would depend on the names and the tone used, and the nature of the bully (is he/she threatening).

Different strategies would be applicable if this represents a real threat.

Whilst it may be possible to laugh off a non-threatening act and/or distract the name-caller, or even to ignore them, this would not be appropriate for a threatening bully.

In this case, strategies such as: assertiveness, self-control, self-belief, and telling others may be helpful.

*A gang of tough-looking learners are coming towards you*

In this case it may be best to avoid them and not to annoy them.

*Background on Bullying* contains many more reasons why a bully might pick on a person. Many of these are things (such as physical characteristics) that learners can do little or nothing about. However, the same applies as with height: standing tall, with confidence, can give a strong and positive demeanour, which may deter bullies.

It is important to remember that bullying is all about power and control. A person can only take control if you give it to them. So this is in each learner's hands. They can choose to maintain control, not to give it away. As regards power, there are different types or sources of power. Height and size are just one aspect. There are also sources of power that can be built and developed – such as self-esteem, personal power (including strength of mind) and respect. Having friends and allies (learners, teachers or other adults) also increases your power base.

### Assertiveness

Assertiveness is about being confident, positive, strong-willed and politely insistent.

It takes a positive frame of mind, and the determination to stay with a certain course. This means you will need to decide on your course of action and then stick with it.

It is best to use assertiveness when dealing with something you really want. Then building the determination not to give in is easier. Once you get into the habit of being assertive, it becomes simpler and more natural.

Here are some tips on being assertive:

#### General

- Decide on the things you really want and then be assertive in achieving these;
- Do not waiver – once you decide to be assertive, see it through;
- Make it clear that this matter is non-negotiable (and keep repeating this, until the message gets through);

- Make sure that your body language, voice and language all match with your assertiveness – practice in front of the mirror.

#### Posture

- Stand tall and straight;
- Hold to the floor firmly and strongly;
- Pull back shoulders and keep head up.

#### Communication

- Listen and reply appropriately;
- Be tactful and diplomatic;
- Be sincere;
- Make your messages positive and strong.

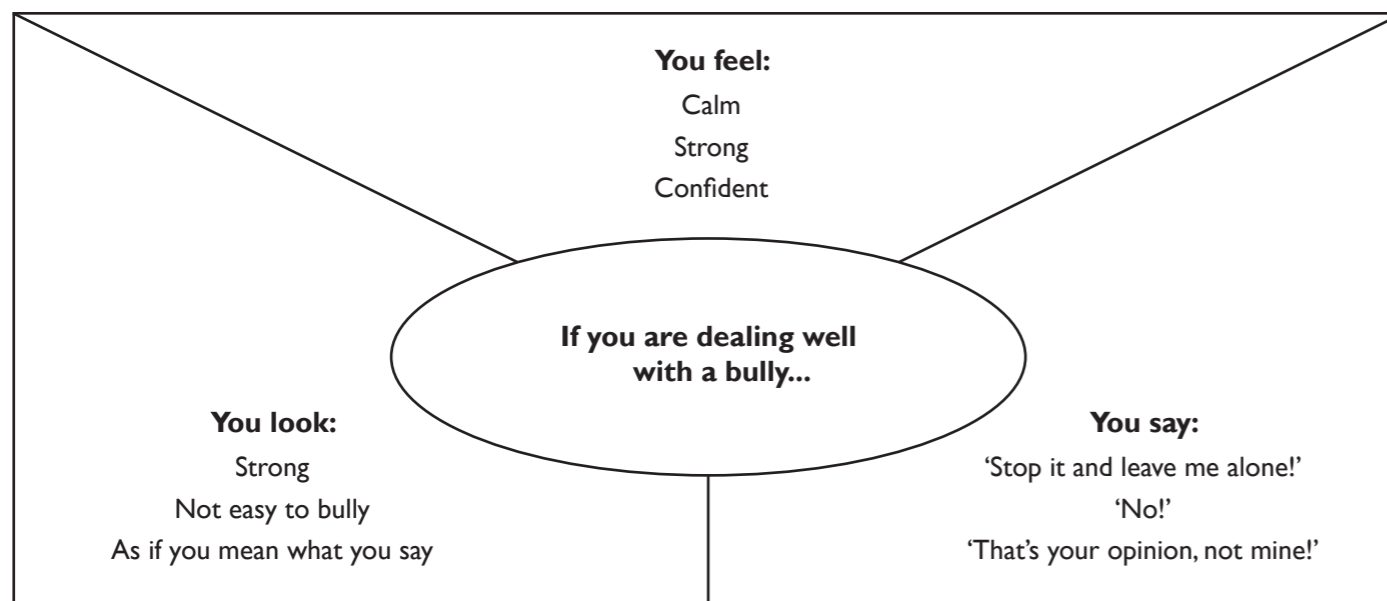
#### Voice

- Try deep breathing beforehand to make your voice firm;
- Relax before speaking;
- Articulate well;
- Project your voice and show determination and conviction;
- Speak slowly and clearly;
- If you ever mess up, start again in a more empathic tone explaining again;
- Practise reading aloud to achieve the right tone and intonation, emphasising relevant words and phrases.

In bullying, the important thing is to decide not to let the bully get to you – and to stay with that resolve.

Repeating your message, and ignoring the bully, can be useful forms of assertiveness.

Educators may wish to give learners handouts on key points/tips from the Introduction, pages 1 to 5.



*“Nobody can hurt me without my permission.”*

Mahatma Gandhi

### Circle Time

Many schools use 'Circle Time', sit in a circle and play games or do something enjoyable for a short time, and then they can discuss matters as a group, including bullying. This is a way for everyone in class to take part in a structured way.

This includes listening to the person making the points without making remarks or laughing. Some schools have a toy or emblem and the only person speaking is the one holding it.

### Counselling/Mediation

The idea is that the two learners talk issues over with a mediator and find a way forward to end the cycle of bullying and complaints. This seems to be more effective when the learners were formerly friends who have fallen out. If the bully is a real aggressor, the problem with this approach is that the victim is encouraged to tell the bully how they feel, and the bully is gaining more ammunition to use at a later date. However, this can be a useful intervention if the school has a trained conflict resolution team.

### Restorative Justice

This approach is supposed to 'empower' young people without giving punishments. Peer mediation and circle time are often part of the process. Restorative Justice has been used for some time for criminal offenders to try to make them understand the effect they've had on people they have burgled or mugged. It can be successful if the bully has some empathy, but otherwise may provide ammunition (in the form of information) for further bullying.

### Bullying Workshops

If there has been a complaint from a parent to the class educator or if one learner is being singled out again and again, time could be given to a group discussion on bullying, with the target in a different group from the bullies.

The educator, youth worker, or whoever is leading the session, could ask for words which describe bullying and write them on a chart. Then the group could be asked for words which describe how someone being bullied or doing the bullying might feel, and then finally for ways they think bullying could be stopped in their own school or group.

The discussion could also involve asking people in the groups to suggest what people witnessing bullying should do about it. If it is done like this, there should not be suspicion the target has talked about what is going on.



### Further Resources

#### Websites:

##### No Bully

<http://www.nobully.org.nz/>

##### Bullying Online

<http://www.bullying.co.uk/>

##### Wikipedia Encyclopaedia

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bullying>

##### Childline - Bullying

<http://www.childline.org.uk/Bullying.asp>

#### Publications:

**Title:** Managing Conflict With Confidence (Primary and Secondary), Australia

**Authors:** Clare Heaton & Maureen Lynch.

**Publisher:** Pearson Longman 2003, ISBN 01-74091-059-1

**Title:** The Anti-Bullying Handbook.

**Author:** Keith Sullivan.

**Publisher:** Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-558388-4

# Class Lesson 1:

## Bullying

### Objectives

This lesson will help learners to understand bullying behaviour and to begin reflection on anti-bullying strategies. It will also help bullies and potential bullies to reflect on and review their behaviour.

### Age/level

Appropriate for ages 9 and above, but adaptable for younger learners.

### Duration

One lesson.

### Materials

- Blackboard or flip chart
- Chalk or marker pen

### Procedure

Organise the learners into groups of about five or six. Give each group the exercise handout on 'What Is Bullying'.

Ask each group to discuss each of the five questions, and to write down their answers briefly.

Read out each question before the groups start the exercise and ask whether they have any questions (just to make sure the exercise is understood).

Give a set time for the exercise.

Ask each group to choose a spokesperson.

At the end of the exercise, ask the spokesperson for each group to briefly tell the class the groups' answers.

When looking at the question 'What do bullies do?', consider and explain the two types of bullying – direct bullying and indirect bullying (i.e. social aggression). You might like to write examples of each on the boards as learners come up with them, under the two categories to show the difference. Stress that any type of bullying is unacceptable.

When looking at the question 'Who do bullies pick on?', stress that some learners are bullied for no particular reason whatsoever.

Whatever the reason why the bully has chosen their target, it is unacceptable. The school, and the class, welcome and respect difference and will not tolerate bullying. Every learner has their own special skills and abilities – and the smaller or weaker learner may have a brilliant brain, and may go on to become a famous scientist or IT specialist (just look at Bill Gates with his Harry Potter glasses – he may well have been bullied at school, but he is now a world-famous multi-billionaire!).

After each presentation, give a short time to answer any questions arising, and to clarify any part that is unclear. Then move on to the next presentation.

At the end of all the presentations, hold a discussion with the class. Draw out any problems with dubious strategies at this stage, by asking the learners what they think the outcome would be if the suggested strategy were used.

See 'Issues to Explore' below for suggested areas for discussion.

Take care not to dismiss or disregard suggestions from any learner/group yourself. Instead ask the class to reflect and comment on the suggestion (if this does not work, then ask the class to consider certain points – to help them realise any deficiencies themselves).

Stress that different strategies for dealing with bullying may be appropriate under different circumstances – there are no right answers. The best thing to do is to work through the situation, the suggested strategy, and what the results are likely to be.

It is helpful to take a few suggested strategies and to work through them with the class. Try one poor suggestion, one good suggestion and a couple of middle-of-the-road suggestions.

Future lessons will provide a wide range of strategies for dealing with bullying, but for this exercise, it is sufficient just to get the learners to start thinking about strategies.

Then repeat the main principles given in 'Issues to Explore' below.

Clarify the definition of bullying using the background notes.

Ask the learners whether they know of anybody who has been bullied. Ask them to share their story with the class, making sure to draw out the

Two assertive tactics are **repetition** and **ignoring**.

Try this exercise to reinforce the ignoring tactic. In their pairs, ask the learners to choose one of them to 'stonewall' (that is, to not answer or respond). Then, ask the other learner to tell their partner animatedly about their favourite place and why they love it so much. The partner has to simply look blank, stare ahead, and make no response whatsoever (including no facial expressions).

What usually happens is that the learners talking start off animatedly, and then gradually lose the will to speak as they get no response!

Ask the learners talking what it felt like to be ignored. Then ask them what bullies would feel like if their bullying went ignored.

Repetition is a similar tactic. It also reinforces assertiveness.

Discuss with learners:

For example, when could these tactics have the wrong impact?

In what other ways could people being bullied show assertiveness?

Show the learners the Y Chart (see overleaf) to reinforce the lesson.

See also 'Issues to Explore'.

## Issues to Explore

See also the background information on bullying.

### Body Language

In communications impact, only 7% depends on the words actually used.

Here are some body language tips:

- Have an open posture and gestures. Don't be rigid, but don't fidget or gesticulate too much. Be relaxed and confident;
- Stance: See below;
- Facial expression: Smile and look confident;
- Spatial distance: Try to get close, but not so close as to crowd them;
- Silence: Don't be afraid to pause. Some space and time is sometimes needed for impact. The ability to look confident during silence can give you a psychological advantage.

### Eye Contact

Used properly, eye contact can help to build a relationship. An eyebrow flash together with a smile is an effective greeting when passing.

Eye contact maintained for a short time longer than usual can make the person being looked at uneasy. It can lead to

a verbal reaction, such as: 'Are you looking at me?' or 'Why are you staring at me?' or even a physical reaction.

There are different cultural practices and traditions as regards eye contact. For example, some African cultures consider downcast eyes to be a sign of respect – whereas educators can sometimes mistakenly take this to be a sign of lying or dishonesty. The Japanese tend to find eye contact uncomfortable, and will often look away, whereas Latin Americans and Spanish tend to like close eye contact (taking this as friendly and open), which can make northern Europeans (who see this as an invasion of their personal space) uncomfortable.

### Stand Tall

Bullies often pick on shorter (or weaker) people, because this gives them the feeling of power that they crave.

Although a shorter person can do nothing about their height (beyond wearing higher shoes/thick soles) they can build their strength and fitness (e.g. by playing sports or going to the gym).

To avoid being targeted by a bully, it may also help to develop a more positive stance: Stand upright, with a relaxed stance. Hold your head high. Place your feet comfortably apart, shoulders back and arms hanging loosely by your side (when not in use). Stand tall and exude confidence.

### Strengthen Your Thoughts, Strengthen Yourself

The exercise shows the power of positive thinking. There is no doubt that positive thinking makes people happier and more confident.

Of course, it is difficult to think positively if you are worried or bullied. But there are ways of managing nerves.

For example:

- Relax. Drink a little water. Sit quietly, but rest your mind (e.g. by watching birds, or looking at the sky).
- Smile. A smile relaxes you and makes you feel brighter.
- Be prepared. Prepare for your encounter with the bully. Rehearse the meeting and the response.
- Expect things to go well. Envisage a successful meeting. Pretend you are confident, even if you do not feel it initially – you soon become confident!
- Try relaxation and breathing exercises (slow, deep breathing can be very calming).

Once you have overcome your nerves, you can concentrate on thinking positively. Remember your skills and abilities, your family and friends. Concentrate on the positive aspects of your life. Then, think about the next encounter with the bully and envisage a successful result – where you stood up for yourself. Feel the pleasure of this outcome. Positive thinking is about imagining, and then believing in, positive outcomes.





Ask for a learner to demonstrate the next exercise.

Ask the learner to place his/her feet a little apart (no wider than the shoulders), and to hold out one arm at shoulder height.

Stand behind the learner and say: -

“Think about how weak you are.

Think how easily you could be bullied by a really tough person.

Tell yourself negative things, like ‘I have no confidence’ and ‘I am weak and worthless’. ‘I cannot stand up to a bully. I will get picked on and hit.’”

Ask the learner to shut their eyes and keep repeating these things to him/herself.

Push down firmly on the learner’s arm.

You will find that the learner has little resistance.

Next, ask the learner to demonstrate the following exercise.

Ask the learner to place their feet a little apart (no wider than the shoulders) and hold out one arm at shoulder height.

Then ask the learner to:

- feel their feet firmly on the ground;
- wriggle their toes and feel the toes hold firmly on the ground;
- feel their heels hold tight onto the ground – strong and firm;

- feel their sturdy and firm legs.

Stand behind the learner and say: “Think about how tall and strong you are.

Think how well you would manage if you were bullied.

Tell yourself positive thoughts, like ‘I am a capable person. I am brave and strong. I am confident. I can stand up for myself. Nobody would dare to mess around with me!’ ”

Ask the learner to shut their eyes and keep repeating these things to themselves.

Push down firmly on the learner’s arm.

You will probably find that the learner has much more resistance.

Ask the learner: -

What happened when you were thinking negatively?

What happened when you were thinking positively?

Organise learners into pairs (of roughly the same height). Ask learners to try the same exercise with their partner.

Then discuss the difference between negative and positive thoughts. Also, how positive thinking could help if you were being bullied.

Ask the class what reasons other than being short there might be for a bully to pick on a person?

See ‘Issues to Explore’ for discussion.

### Assertiveness

Explain to learners what assertiveness is (see ‘Issues to Explore’).

Discuss with learners what can be said assertively to stop a person bullying you. Write suggestions on the board.

Then, ask learners to each turn to the learner next to them, and to say one of these assertive phrases to the person next to them in a firm, assertive voice, but without shouting.

Next ask each learner to find a partner. Each pair should face their partner, so that there are two large circles – one inner and one outer around the room (with one half of each partnership in each). Help the learners if they become confused!

Ask the learners to stand assertively.

Then, looking their partner in the eye, the learners in the inner circle are to say in an assertive voice: ‘Stop it and leave me alone!’, or one of the other phrases on the board, as if they were talking to a bully.

The learners on the outer circle should then take their turn and repeat the same phrase back to their partner.

Then, the learners on the inner circle stay where they are, and the learners on the outer circle take one step to the left, so they are facing another partner. The learners on the inner circle then repeat their assertive phrase, and it is copied by the outer circle. Then, the circles move round another person along. The exercise can be repeated until the learners reach their original partner.

To make the exercise shorter, the learners can move along two people (double spacing) or three people (triple spacing). But if there has been bullying in the class, and the class is not too large; it is useful to move around one person at a time.

Explain to the class that the important thing is to be determined not to let a bully get to you. Once you are determined, assertiveness will follow.

impact of the bullying on the victim. If the learner relates a story about being bullied personally, try to make the class supportive. For example: ‘I am sure your classmates would help you out, if this ever happened again – wouldn’t you, class?’ Praise any positive suggestions of support.

Then ask the class for suggested strategies for dealing with the situation shared. Work through some of these with the class – what would be likely to happen if the suggested action were taken? In this way, try to work towards improved suggestions.

Explain the school’s bullying policy, if there is one.

Stress that some bullying is actually criminal, and can be reported to the police, for example:

- Assault: hitting, punching or kicking;
- Harassment: continual name calling, making abusive phone calls, posting abuse on the internet or sending threatening SMS’s.

Explain about any school Conflict Resolution mediation programme or other peer monitoring/mediation scheme.

### Issues to Explore

See also the background information on bullying.

Bullying behaviour is repeated incidents involving:

- A bigger, stronger, better educated or more powerful child against a smaller or weaker child, or
- A group of children against a single child.
- See background information for reasons why people can be bullied. Make sure that a good selection of reasons is covered. If the learners do not give enough reasons, add some others. But add that the bully can often be jealous of the person they are bullying (e.g. because they are wealthier, cleverer, have more friends etc.).

When strategies are discussed, make sure that learners are aware of the main principles:

- TELL, TELL, TELL. This does not mean that you are a tell-tale, you are simply doing the right thing;



- Practise what you want to say;
- Keep a note or diary of what is happening;
- Ask your parents to visit the school;
- Talk over what to do with a friend, an educator, your mom or dad or someone you trust;
- It is right to tell an adult that you are being bullied and to ask for their help. But you don’t have to let them take over. You can discuss with them what you would like to happen, and then make your own choice;
- If your school has a system of peer mediation: report your problem to your class monitor, a learner mediator or CR educator – they will be sympathetic and trained to deal with your problem;
- Don’t give up.

## Class Exercise What is Bullying?

### Exercise

- |                         |   |   |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1. What do bullies do?  | 3. Who do bullies pick on?                | 5. What could you do if you saw somebody being bullied? |
| 2. What do bullies say? | 4. What could you do if you were bullied? |   |

## Class Lesson 2:

### Who Is The Bully?

#### Objectives

To help learners to understand the weakness behind the bully's façade, in order to lessen fear and reluctance to countering bullying.

To make bullies and potential bullies reflect upon their behaviour and consider alternatives.

#### Age/level

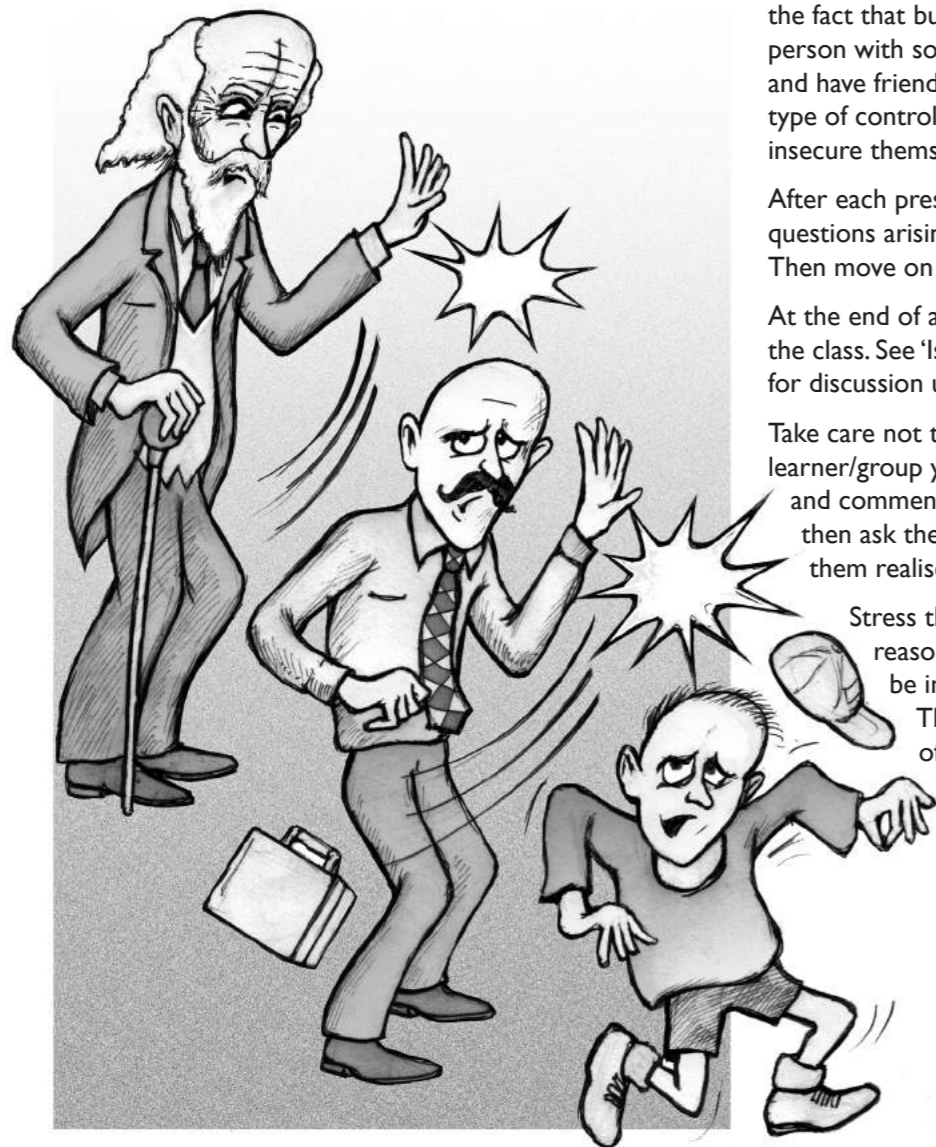
Appropriate for ages 9 and above, but adaptable for younger learners

#### Duration

One lesson

#### Homework

See below.



#### Materials

- Blackboard or flip chart
- Chalk or marker pen

#### Procedure

Organise the learners into groups of about five or six. Give each group a copy of the exercise handout on 'Who is the Bully?' (page 11 below).

Ask each group to discuss each of the five questions, and to write down brief answers to each of them.

Read out each question before the groups start the exercise, and ask whether they have any questions (just to make sure the exercise is understood).

Give a set time for the exercise.

Ask each group to choose a spokesperson.

At the end of the exercise, ask the spokesperson for each group to briefly tell the class the groups' answers.

You can write key words or prompts on the board during each presentation to ensure that you can sum up accurately, and follow-up on any important points.

When looking at the question on 'Who is the bully?', stress the fact that bullying is in fact a weakness, not a strength. A person with social skills could develop genuine popularity and have friends, without resorting to bullying. Bullying is a type of control and people who need to control are often insecure themselves.

After each presentation, allow a short time to answer any questions arising, and to clarify any part that is unclear. Then move on to the next presentation.

At the end of all the presentations, hold a discussion with the class. See 'Issues to Explore' below for suggested areas for discussion under each question.

Take care not to dismiss or disregard suggestions from any learner/group yourself, but instead ask the class to reflect and comment on the suggestion (if this does not work, then ask the class to consider certain points – to help them realise any deficiencies themselves).

Stress that people may become bullies for different reasons. This is complicated, and they should not be immediately hated and ostracised (left out). They may be victims themselves, and in need of professional help.

Ask the learners whether they know of anybody who has been a bully. Ask them to share their story with the class, making sure to draw out the reasons why the person took to bullying, if possible. Was the bully really happy? What happened to them in the end?

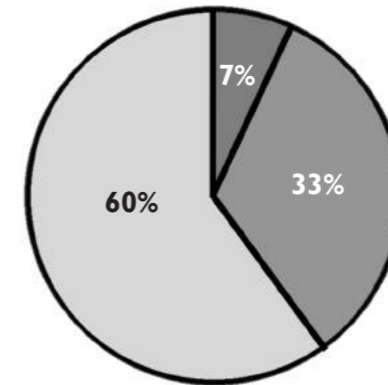
Remind the learners of the definition of bullying. Stress that any type of bullying is unacceptable.

See also 'Issues to Explore' below, and bring out relevant facts and tips.

Discuss what it felt like to be:

- Easy to bully;
- Not easily bullied.

Stress that confident body language can help you avoid being bullied.



Approximately:

- 7% depends on words used
- 33% on voice and intonation
- 60% on body language

#### Eye Contact

Explain to the learners that people give each other different looks for different situations. This is 'eye contact'.

Standing straight and looking another person directly in the eye can send signals of self-confidence, or it can be threatening. What makes a direct look either confident and open, or threatening? Ask learners to try with a partner.

Take it in turns to give a look that is:

- Confident and open;
- Threatening.

Can the partner tell the difference? If not, what should be changed?

After this quick exercise, stress how difficult it is to be misunderstood! Ask learners to practice at home in a mirror.

Ask the learners to give suggestions on the different types of looks that people give each other. Write the suggestions on the board. It is not necessary to collect too many, as the exercise is only an illustration, but make sure the following are included: -

- An interested look;
- Friendly eye contact;
- Staring, hostile look;
- Expressionless, disinterested look ('fish eyes').

Ask the learners to turn to the person next to them and to give each other the above looks in turn.

Then, ask the learners how it felt to be on the receiving end of each. Ask which of these looks might make a bully feel aggressive?

Discuss with learners different cultural practices and traditions regarding eye contact. See 'Issues to Explore' for examples. We shouldn't presume that we know about a person from a different culture from their method of eye contact.

#### Stand Tall

Ask learners for suggestions about what a bully may say to a shorter person. Write some suggestions on the board.

Then, choose two learners to demonstrate a short exercise.

First, learner A lies flat on their back on the floor.

Then, learner B bullies learner A (using some of the suggestions given), looking down at them.

Then they change places, with learner B lying flat on their back.

Then, learner B bullies learner A from the ground, looking up at them.

Next the learners swap roles and repeat the exercise.

At the end, ask the learners what they felt when:

- They were bullying from above?
- They were bullying from below?
- They were being bullied?

Then, organise the learners into pairs and ask them all to do this activity. Discuss briefly afterwards:

- How did it feel to do this activity?
- Did they feel more powerful when standing above and bullying?
- Why do bullies often pick on shorter people?
- What can a shorter person do to maximise their size?

See 'Issues to Explore' for further information to include.

#### Strengthen Your Thoughts, Strengthen Yourself

Ask the class:

- If they think that negative thoughts affect their confidence;
- How this lack of confidence shows itself (in themselves or others)?
- Whether they think that positive thinking could help them to appear stronger and more confident?

## Class Lesson 3:

### Stand Up for Yourself

#### Objectives:

To help learners to:

- Realise how positive thoughts give strength and confidence;
- Understand the role of body language and eye contact, in deterring bullies;
- Understand and begin to develop assertiveness.

To warn bullies and potential bullies that learners will stand up for themselves.

#### Age/level

Appropriate for ages 8 to 14, but adaptable for younger learners.

#### Duration

Two lessons.

#### Materials

- Blackboard or flip chart
- Chalk or marker pen
- Pie chart on Body Language (page 13) can be drawn on board



## Procedure

### Body Language

Ask learners whether they think there are some learners who would be more easily bullied than others?

Ask a learner to demonstrate the following activity to the class: Ask them to imagine that they are new to the school. At their previous school the learner was picked on and bullied. They have come to this school but have not yet made a friend and expect to be bullied. Ask the learner to walk across the room in a way that would show that they would be easy to bully. How does this learner look?

- Not confident?
- Frightened expression?
- Head down?
- Feet dragging?
- Shoulders drooped?

Ask all the learners to walk around the room, looking as if they would be easy to bully.

Next, ask the learner to imagine that they are new to this school. At their previous school the learner had lots of friends and was happy. The learner expects to make friends and to settle into school quickly and not to be bullied.

As the learner to walk across the room in a way that would show that he/she would not be easy to bully. How does this learner look?

- Confident?
- Calm, relaxed, friendly expression, 'cool'?
- Head held high?
- Shoulders straight and relaxed?

Ask all the learners to walk around the room, looking as if they would not be easy to bully

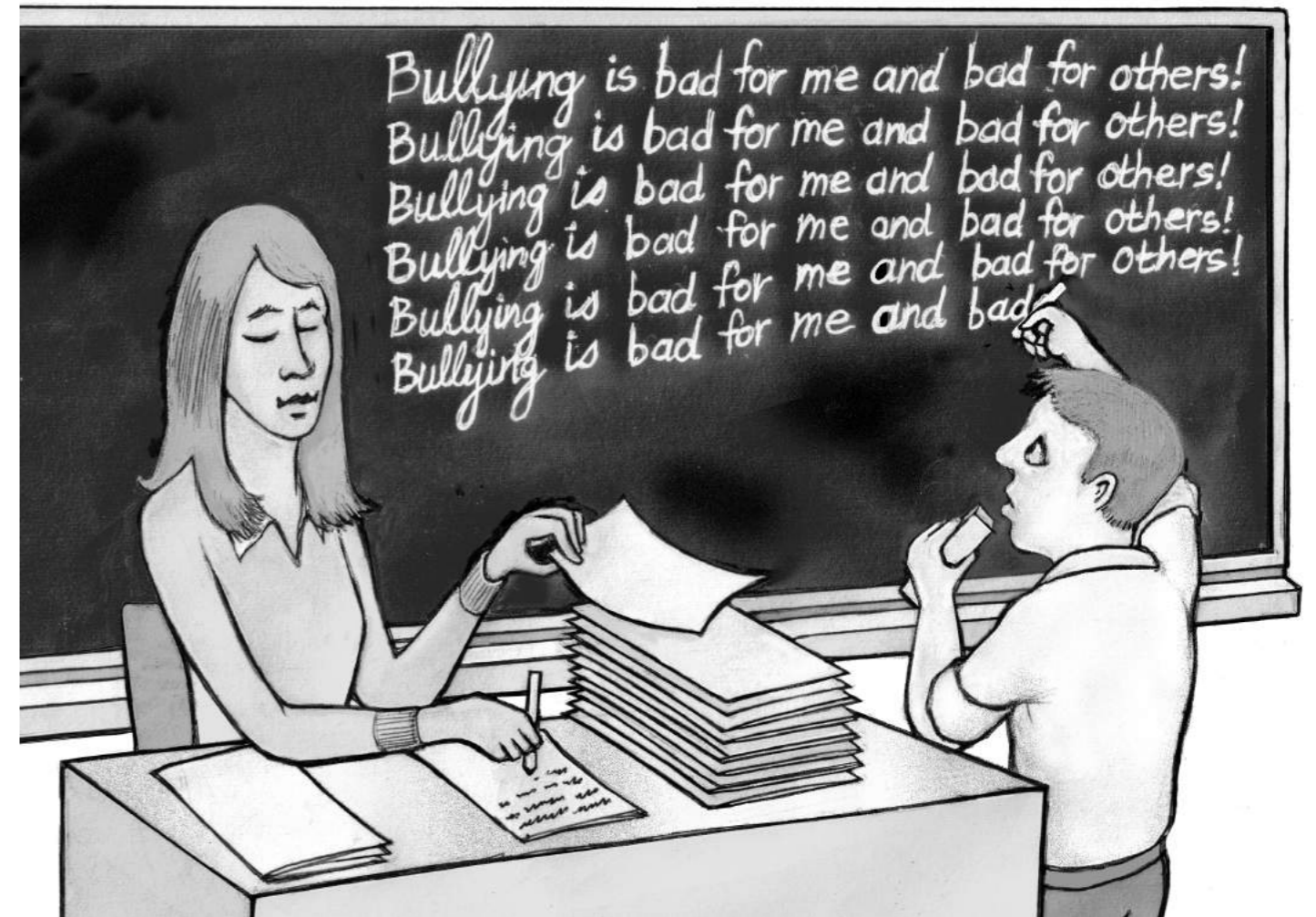
Make the point that if you look too aggressive, it may appear to be a challenge to the bully – and he may then want to pick a fight with you! (An example of this is that film stars who play strong, macho roles are often picked on in public – by men who are looking for a fight with them.)

Research shows that standing tall and walking confidently makes you less likely to be targeted by bullies. Bullies appear reluctant to pick on somebody who they think is strong and walking with a sense of purpose.

Now display the pie chart (in 'Issues to Explore' below).

Use this to explain the importance of body language:

In communication, only 7% of the impact of the message is based on the words used; 33% is based on the voice and intonation; and an amazing 60% is based on body language. Yet, when we rehearse communication, how often do we just concentrate on the words we will use? It is clear that we need to focus much more on our body language.



Remind learners of the school's bullying policy, if there is one.

Stress that some bullying is actually criminal, and can be reported to the police, for example:

- Assault: hitting, punching or kicking;
- Harassment: continual name calling, making abusive phone calls, posting abuse on the internet or sending threatening SMS's.

Remind learners about any school Conflict Resolution mediation programme or other peer monitoring scheme.

Finally, remind the learners to tell if they have any problems with bullying themselves. Ask the class to get together to stamp out bullying – if they work together no bully would be strong enough to deal with them!

### Issues to Explore

See also the background information on bullying.

### Why do bullies behave as they do?

When examining the reasons why people become bullies, make sure that the reasons given in the background information are included in the list. If one of the learners is a bully, but the reasons why they became one are not included in the list, they may not realise that this may actually relate to them. As a consequence, they might not be

personally affected by the lesson or begin to consider their behaviour.

In cases where people bully because they themselves have been – or are being – bullied or subjected to violence, they should be sympathised with, but they need to deal with this in a way that provides a long-term solution. Bullying is no solution – in fact it only exacerbates the problem. It is known that there is often a circle of violence, whereby those who suffer violence (physical or verbal) in childhood in turn inflict violence on others. So the violence and the suffering continue and it is vital that the circle of violence is broken.

### What are the advantages to a bully of bullying?

- Appearance of power and strength (temporarily);
- Appearance of popularity (false);
- Gain money and other people's possessions (through extortion/stealing);
- Others are scared of fighting them.

But stress that these are all illusions. The bully is constantly struggling to maintain this image. Even any money and possessions gained will not last – stealing will be punished and the 'spoils' taken away. If the bully gathers a gang around him, then other gangs will want to fight and bring them down, so they can 'rule'.

## What are the disadvantages to a bully of being a bully?

- Has to maintain the bullying façade;
- Cannot form genuine relationships/friendships;
- May be punished by the school (e.g. detention or suspension);
- His or her parents may be told;
- The police may be called in;
- Others may fight his or her gang.

## What might happen to a bully?

See the disadvantages above.

Make sure to bring out that bullies can often only continue bullying because other children side with them. These children are usually not real friends, but do this to be safe from the bullying themselves. These allies are likely to leave the bully who then becomes, in effect, friendless. Bullies rarely make real friends because nobody trusts them, and trust is an essential part of genuine friendship.

Bullies can never maintain the façade indefinitely. They are constantly struggling to cling on to power and control. In later life, they sometimes marry weak partners in order to terrorise them, thus making for a miserable marriage and missing out on real love (i.e. being unable to form healthy relationships).

As their power wanes, bullies often become miserable moaners, feeling the world has given them a bad deal.



## What could bullies do instead of bullying?

- Decide to become a real part of the class, giving up anti-social behaviour;
- Concentrate on their strengths and build them rather than working on weakening others;
- Make real friends that they can respect and enjoy, instead of weak 'followers';
- Undertake anger management training;
- Take steps to solve any violence or bullying in the home;
- Use their energy (and aggression) on the sports field instead;
- Do voluntary work (e.g. with the SPCA or a youth group) to develop empathy;
- Often professional help is needed (psychologist, social worker etc.).

## Learner Worksheet

### Exercise handout

See Class Exercise "Who is the Bully" on p11 overleaf.

### Homework:

After the lesson, learners can be asked to either draw a picture or cartoon depicting a bully or to write a poem about one.

## Class Exercise Who is the Bully?

### Exercise

1. Why do you think bullies behave as they do?

2. What are the advantages to a bully of bullying?

3. What are the disadvantages to a bully of being a bully?

4. What might happen to a bully?

5. What could bullies do instead of bullying?

