

# ACTIVITIES AND LESSON PLANS

## MIDDLE SCHOOL

### What's inside?

**The following packet contains detailed plans for activities, games, and lessons that will engage your students in bullying prevention and social-emotional learning.**

It is essential that students understand their role in potential bullying situations through dynamic, experiential lessons. It is our goal to get students participating in activities that challenge them to adopt different perspectives and to think critically about the nuances of social relationships, conflicts, and bullying.

**The packet is organized thematically according to four concise rules against bullying\*** that provide students with clear, actionable steps. The activities and lessons herein were carefully curated to emphasize and underscore the essential values of each rule:

1. I will not bully others.
2. I will try to help students who are bullied.
3. I will try to include students who are left out.
4. If I know someone is being bullied, I will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

\*Rules from The Department of Health & Human Services in partnership with the Department of Education and the Department of Justice.



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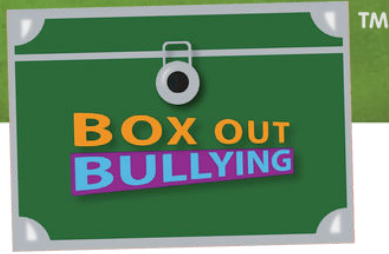
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**I will not bully others.**

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# WHAT'S MY ROLE?



<b>LESSON NAME:</b>	<b>WHAT'S MY ROLE?</b>
<b>Grade Level:</b>	Middle School
<b>Background:</b>	<p>Bullying situations involve many more players than simply the bullied student and the student who does the bullying. Research has shown that students who witness bullying are also affected. The role of bystanders can run a continuum from passive supporters of the bullying to students who actively try to stop it or support the bullied student. While these concepts should already have been introduced to high school students before conducting this class meeting, it is important to offer regular opportunities for teens to role-play realistic strategies they might use to counteract bullying, which include supporting bullied students and reporting bullying to adults.</p> <p>The purpose of this lesson is to problem-solve ways they can change their behaviors in bullying situations. This session includes two activities.</p>
<b>Goals:</b>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identify the part each student plays in a bullying situation</li><li>• consider ways their role changes in different bullying situations</li><li>• consider group mechanisms that reinforce undesirable student behavior or keep them "locked in" to certain roles on the continuum</li><li>• consider ways that group mechanisms could be applied in positive ways to help students respond in a more helpful manner to bullied peers</li></ul>
<b>Materials:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What's My Role? Bullying Circle Role Cards, one copy</li><li>• The Bullying Circle Handout</li><li>• What's My Role? Scenario Worksheet one per group</li><li>• Blank sheets of paper</li><li>• Pencils</li></ul>

## LESSON PROCEDURE:

### Set Up:

Prepare the Bullying Circle diagram to show students. Either make a handout of the bullying circle for each student or project it on the board. Use attachment.

# WHAT'S MY ROLE?



Activity 1 (5th-6th grades): Print What's My Role? Bullying Circle Role Cards and cut the cards apart. Set up seven chairs in a circle in the front of the room, and set one Bullying Circle role card on each chair.

Activity 2 (7th grade and up): Print What's My Role? Scenario Worksheet. Each group will need a copy. Provide additional paper so that students can each write their own "scripts," but encourage the group to write the entire scenario on the worksheet.

Introduction: (10 minutes)

Draw or project an image of the Bullying Circle on the board.

## **Activity 1:** (20 minutes)

1. Have seven volunteers come forward to represent the seven roles in the Bullying Circle as shown in the diagram. Place an empty chair in the center of the circle to represent the eighth role, the Student Who Is Bullied.
2. Briefly set the stage by reading the scenario below. Then, ask each of the seven student volunteers to read what is printed on their role cards. Place the eighth card (Marcus) on the empty chair (there is no script for this role):
  - Tameera is a popular cheerleader. Her boyfriend, Greg, is captain of the basketball team. Tameera, along with Greg and Tameera's best friend, Dayan, enjoy picking on Marcus, a boy in their class who is a bit of a loner, particularly when they have an audience. Recently, they have moved from commenting about the fact that Marcus is not good in sports to making fun of his clothes. This scene takes place at the lockers before classes begin. Other students, including some of Greg's teammates, are nearby.
3. After reading this scenario, ask several students to volunteer taking turns sitting in the "Student Who Is Bullied" chair. **As you sit in the chair, describe how it would feel to be in that situation and what you would wish or hope other students would do to help.**
4. **If you were sitting in this chair (Student Who Is Bullied), who would it seem had the most power in this circle? Explain why you think so,**
5. To the rest of the class: **Now, take a moment to consider which of these roles you think most students in our school play. Once you have an idea in mind, come stand behind/beside the person in the role you are thinking of here in the Bullying Circle.**



# WHAT'S MY ROLE?



6. **Where in the circle would the power lie now? How has it changed now that you see where most students in the school stand in the circle? What does this view of power tell you about how most students feel when they see bullying?** Note: While initially it may seem that most of the power lies with the students doing the bullying or those supporting them, most students in the class will stand behind one of the other bystander roles—giving them a very powerful insight about the important roles bystanders actually play.
7. Have everyone take the seats.

## **Discussion: Activity 1** (10 minutes)

1. How did your view of the circle change after the whole class took a place in the circle? How might that make you feel if you were
  - the student who is bullied?
  - defenders or possible defenders?
  - passive or disengaged onlookers?
  - followers of the student who bullies?
2. What impact might this potential shift in power have if you were the student who initiated the bullying?
3. Do you think the roles in the Bullying Circle stay the same or change depending on the circumstances? What factors contribute to how or whether they change or stay the same? (Location, opportunity, supervision, who are the people involved, what activities are involved, time of day, day of week, etc.)
4. Where do groups of power lie within our school? How do things like popularity, school traditions (prom queen/king, homecoming court, honor roll, academic "tracks"), and student activities (sports, music or performing groups, student government, clubs, paper) affect what power students do/don't have?
5. The Bullying Circle demonstrates that bullying is really a group phenomenon. What factors affect group behavior in situations like bullying? Introduce the concept of **Group Mechanisms\*** in Bullying that keep students from acting or "moving along the continuum" to more proactive and positive bystander roles. Encourage students to consider examples of each.
6. What are the characteristics of defenders?
7. What might encourage teens to change their behaviors and roles to go against the crowd in a bullying situation? How would a bystander benefit from defending someone? What could go wrong?

# WHAT'S MY ROLE?



8. How can these group mechanisms be used to encourage students to respond in more positive ways? (To step in to stop bullying, to have the courage to report it to an adult, or to let others know that you don't approve of what's happening, that it's not funny, that it's not okay.)
9. How can we help each other focus on getting involved and supporting each other? What would help teens feel better about reporting bullying and not consider it in a negative way, like "snitching"?

\*Refer to **group mechanisms** that keep students from acting in more positive bystander roles. These group mechanisms reduce feelings of guilt or remorse, and they include the following:

- Behavior is contagious—people follow the crowd—social contagion.
- Students are used to seeing aggression and it doesn't bother them as much as it did before. They're desensitized—weakening normal inhibitions against aggression. (If other people are doing this and nobody stops it, it must be okay. They do it, so why shouldn't i?)
- If others are 'around during the bullying, they can take care of 'things—decreased sense of individual responsibility. (It isn't MY responsibility to help others.)
- The bullied student is probably "asking for it"—changes in how the bullied student is perceived. (Person being harmed deserves what they get—they are not worthy of respect.)

## **Activity 2:** (25 minutes)

1. Divide students into groups of eight. Assign each student in the group a role in the Bullying Circle. Give each group a copy of the What's My Role? Scenario Worksheet.
2. **In your small groups, you will develop a short but realistic bullying scenario that high school students might encounter. Each of you will then develop a two-or three-sentence script for the role in the Bullying Circle you have been assigned and then record it on your group's worksheet.** If needed, provide students with prompts to get them started: a hot spot (like the cafeteria or hallway) or a situation (like cliques or cyber bullying). Allow 10 minutes for this portion of the activity.
3. **When you write the script for each role, be sure it includes the following key points on your worksheet:** (write on board)
  - Why the person is in that role
  - How it feels to be in that role
  - What the person believes others think of him or her
4. Call on each group to briefly present their scenario. The student who was assigned the role of

# WHAT'S MY ROLE?



the student who was bullied will read the scenario to the class as well as his or her own sentences from the script. Each of the other seven students in the group will read the two or three sentences that describe their actions or words for their role. Move to the next group without processing in between. Allow approximately 3 minutes each.

5. Bring student' back into the meeting circle for discussion.

## **Discussion: Activity 2** (15 minutes)

1. Consider the different scenarios you just observed. What was it like to watch all these at once? Focus in particular on the bystander roles (D, E, and F).
2. Referring to the various role-plays presented, go through each of the seven roles and ask:
  - What do you think motivates students in this position?
  - What do you think students in this role are feeling?
  - How do you think other students view them?
  - How do you think these roles change (according to situation/over time)? On what does the behavior depend?
3. Why do you think students seem to get locked into a certain role? Ask for examples.
4. Do you think it's hard to break out of these roles? Why/why not? What might make it easier for kids to try on different roles?
5. For A, B, C roles: What would it take for someone to move out of this position to disengage from the bullying and respond differently?
6. For D, E, F roles: What support and information (from adults or peers) would students need to take positive action? What options do they have for action?
7. Refer to each of the scenarios. Brainstorm as many ideas as possible that teens could use to respond "on the spot" when they see or hear bullying like in the scenario. Ask someone from each group to record class ideas for the scenario on the back of the worksheet. Following brainstorming, encourage students to evaluate the various options and highlight those that are most realistic.
8. What are some of the consequences when everyone thinks someone else will respond to bullying?
9. Why do you think so few teens report bullying that happens to them or someone else? What's behind that? Why do you think students feel they are "ratting" or "snitching" when they report bullying? What can change that?



# WHAT'S MY ROLE?



## Wrap Up:

"As bystanders, we have many choices about how to act when someone is being bullied. Summarize key points from the students' discussion.

You can either join in the bullying or do nothing, which adds to the power of those who are harming others, or you can choose to support someone who is being hurt. You can help diffuse the situation, influence the person who is causing harm, report the bullying to an adult, or directly support the person who is being bullied.

There isn't one perfect act or phrase that you can use that will be effective in every situation. It takes practice and sometimes help from those around you. The most important thing you can do is to respond in some way and show the bullied student that you are concerned about him or her."

"Teens often feel that they are "snitching" or breaking confidence when they report bullying." This is one of the trends OBPP aims to shift. **Students may need opportunities to practice ways of reporting bullying to an adult.** We encourage you to use role-playing in small groups, or to write sample scripts of things they might say individually, and then discuss as class.

- What are some ways you could report bullying? (In person, using notes, anonymous tip boxes, etc.)
- Which adults would you report to?
- When Could you do it?
- What Would you Say? What information would be important to share?
- Would you rather go alone or with a friend? How would you want the adult to respond (What would you want the adult to say and do)?
- What concerns might you have about doing this? How could those concerns be addressed so you felt more comfortable?

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS:

**History/ World Civilizations:** Students may research and compare strategies used by diplomats or leaders in response to crises, particularly when bystander nations played a role (Holocaust; genocide in Rwanda or Serbia/Croatia, genocide in famine in Somalia, or disasters in China, Japan, and Haiti),

# WHAT'S MY ROLE?



**Current Events:** Instruct students to find example from current events where bystanders helped to change a situation (Whistleblowers, crime stoppers, local people who helped bring "about social changes). Ask them to evaluate-what made the bystander behavior effective.

**English Literature:** Ask students to choose a piece of literature that illustrates their views about how bystanders can bring about social change and use examples to support their premise. (Examples of literature might include To Kill a Mockingbird by: Harper Lee, The Diary of a Young: Girl The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain, Lord of the flies by William Golding or Animal Farm by George Orwell.).

**Social Science/Psychology:** Suggest that: students investigate examples of the group phenomenon concept as it affects bullying, particularly what can happen when everyone thinks someone else will step in. They might look for information on the 1964 murder of Kitty Genovese in New York City which led to research on What came to be known as the "bystander effect."

# WHAT'S MY ROLE?



## BULLYING CIRCLE ROLE CARDS

**Instructions:** Print this document and cut apart the cards.



**A. Student Who Bullies (Tameera):**

Check it out you guys. Cook at what Marcus is wearing today!

**E. Disengaged Onlooker (Marina, whose locker is near to Marcus's locker):**

(To no one in particular) Let me out of here! I just want to get to class!

**B. Follower (Greg, Tameera's**

**boyfriend):** You're right, Tam. . . not only does he play like a girl, but he's starting to dress like one.

**F. Possible Defender (Claudio):**

(To himself) Man, hate it when they do this but there's no way I can say anything.

**C. Supporter (Dayan, Tameera's**

**best friend):** (Laughs) Yeah, wonder who picks out his outfits for him—they must be totally color-blind.

**G. Defender (Tyrel):**

Hey, c'mon—just back off, you guys. He's not doing anything to you. Marcus, don't listen to them.

**D. Passive Supporter (Adam, Greg's**

**teammate):** (To himself) This ought to be good! think hang out and see whathappens next.

**H. Student Who Is Bullied (Marcus)**

# WHAT'S MY ROLE?



## SCENARIO WORKSHEET

### Scenario Summary:

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### Scripts for each role in the Bullying Circle

Remember to consider each of the following points in your script: (1) Why the person is in that role, (2) How it feels to be in that role, and (3) What the person believes others think of him or her:

#### A. Student who bullies:

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#### B. Follower:

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#### C. Supporter:

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#### D. Passive Supporter:

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# WHAT'S MY ROLE?



## SCENARIO WORKSHEET

**E. Disengaged onlooker:**

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**F. Possible defender:**

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**G. Defender:**

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**H. Student who is bullied:**

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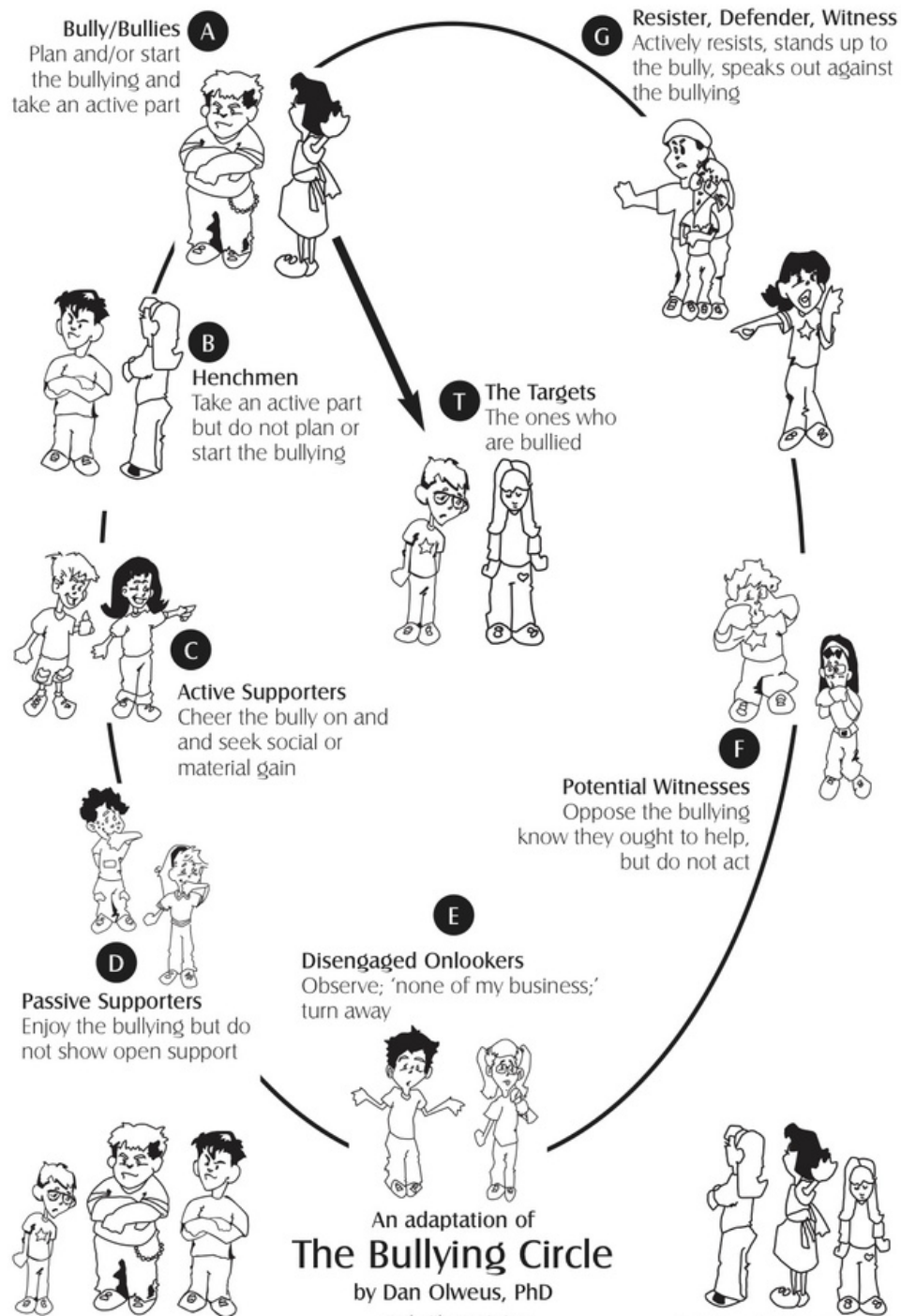
\*On the back of this worksheet or another sheet of paper, list options for responding positively in this situation. Put an asterisk ( \* ) next to those you think are most realistic and useful.



# WHAT'S MY ROLE?



## BULLYING CIRCLE



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# STATE ANTI-BULLYING LAWS



<b>LESSON NAME:</b>	<b>STATE ANTI-BULLYING LAWS AND SCHOOL POLICIES</b>
<b>Grade Level:</b>	Middle School
<b>Background:</b>	<p>In an effort to ensure a safe school climate for students in public schools, nearly all states in America have enacted anti-bullying laws. As of December 1, 2011, 47 states had enacted such laws. These laws differ widely from state to state in their requirements for schools, but typically require public school districts to develop policies about bullying. In December 2010, the secretary for the U.S. Department of Education, Arne Duncan, identified several key components of state laws. In this class meeting, students will compare requirements of their own state laws with many of these key components. They then will examine how state requirements are reflected in their own school's policy on bullying. The purpose of this class meeting is to help students appreciate policy-makers' concerns about bullying and critically analyze their own state's statutory requirements and their own school's policy. There are two activities in this lesson, which likely will need stretch over two class sessions.</p>
<b>Goals:</b>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• discuss provisions of their state's anti-bullying law.</li><li>• compare their state law with key components of state laws on bullying outlined by the U.S. Department of Education.</li><li>• discuss how their school's anti-bullying policy reflects the requirements of their state's anti-bullying law.</li><li>• discuss ways their state law and school policy are intended to create a positive school climate.</li></ul>
<b>Materials:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Printout of your state's anti bullying law*, one copy for each small group</li><li>• Printout of our school's (or district's) anti-bullying policy, one copy per small group</li></ul> <p>*Links to your state's legislation can be found at the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) website (<a href="http://nasbe.org/healthy_schools/hs/index.php">http://nasbe.org/healthy_schools/hs/index.php</a>) or by accessing your state legislature's website and searching current state laws for "bullying." If you state does not have an anti-bullying law, search pending bills in your state legislature or select a law from a neighboring state to analyze.</p>

# STATE ANTI-BULLYING LAWS



## LESSON PROCEDURE:

### Set Up:

#### **Activity 1:**

Make one copy of your state's anti-bullying law for every two to three students (collect these to reuse in activity 2). If the law is quite long, search for or develop a summary of key components to hand out with the law. Print out one copy of the Anti-Bullying Laws Checklist from for every two to three students. On the board, write or project a list of the fifteen components in the Anti-Bullying Laws Checklist.

#### **Activity 2:**

Print out one copy of the Anti-Bullying Laws Checklist from for every two to three students. Have available copies of your state's anti-bullying law (one for every two to three students) from activity 1. If the law is quite long, search for or develop a summary of key components to hand out with the law. Or have both the law and the policy available to project electronically. Have one copy of your school's anti-bullying policy from activity 1 available for every two to three students.

### Introduction: (10 minutes)

**"Since 1999, almost every state in the country has passed an anti-bullying law. Why do you think there has been so much recent interest in passing anti-bullying laws?** (Concern about student safety; attention in the media to deaths from school violence and suicide related to bullying behavior; increased awareness about bullying and its harmful effects.)

**These state laws are very different from each other, but they typically require school districts to create a policy about bullying. What do you think is the goal of these laws?** (To reduce bullying, make schools safer, improve the climate at schools.)

**Why is it important for students, school staff, and parents to understand what their own state law says?** (Staff need to know what is required of them for development of policies, prevention, and intervention; students and parents need to understand their rights and responsibilities; all may benefit from understanding the seriousness with which state legislators take bullying.)"

# STATE ANTI-BULLYING LAWS



## **Activity 1:** (25 minutes)

1. **Because state laws are so diverse, the U.S. Department of Education published a summary of key components of state bullying laws as a guide to policy-makers who are interested in changing their laws or developing new laws.**
2. **Let's take a look at a summary of what the U.S. Department of Education says are some important parts of state laws on bullying.** Briefly review the key elements on the Anti-Bullying Laws Checklist.
3. Divide students into small groups of two to three students, give each group a copy of the checklist, and assign each group three to four key components. Also, give each group a copy of your state law.
4. **First, read through your assigned key components together as a group. Then take turns reading aloud sections of our state's anti-bullying law. While reading, you may come across words or concepts that you don't understand. If so, circle them on your copy. Once you've read the law, discuss as a group whether or not our state law covers each component. Check of Yes, No, or In Part.**

## **Discussion: Activity 1** (10 minutes)

1. When groups have finished, invite them to come back together into the meeting circle.
2. Tally how many of the fifteen key components received Yes, No, and In Part marks. If a key component was assigned to more than one group, discuss whether the groups came to similar or different conclusions in their tallies.
3. After reading the law, what questions do you have about it? Were there terms or language you'd like clarified?
4. Looking at your checklist, how well do you think our state law covers the key components outlined by the U.S. Department of Education?
5. How does the law protect students?
6. What are the strengths of the law?
7. What would you say are its weaknesses or shortcomings?
8. Do you think this law will help to create more positive social climates at schools? If so, how? If not, why not?
9. Is there funding available in our bill to help schools implement the required plan? How might that affect how schools implement it?



# STATE ANTI-BULLYING LAWS



10. How are schools' efforts overseen or evaluated?
11. How could our law be strengthened to protect students further?
12. Do you think that anti-bullying laws should be the same from state to state? Why/why not?

## **Activity 2:** (20 minutes)

1. **As we've discussed, most state laws require school districts to create anti-bullying policies. The laws vary in what these policies should include, however. We're now going to take a look at our own school (or school district's) anti-bullying policy and compare how it addresses the requirements of our state laws.**
2. Divide students into small groups of two to three students each. Give each group a copy of the state law and your school's bullying prevention policy.
3. Have students review and underline key points in your school's policy.
4. Hand out or project your state's anti-bullying law on the board. As a large group, go through each section of the law, asking students if they see these provisions reflected in your school's policy.
5. On the board, make a list of any components included in the state law that are not reflected in the school's anti-bullying policy or that are reflected but that students feel are weak. You could title this list "Missing from Our Bullying Policy."
6. Make a separate list of components your school policy addresses that are not required in the state law. Title this list "Added to Our Bullying Policy."

## **Discussion: Activity 2** (15 minutes)

1. If your school's policy is a strong one, ask students how they feel the policy make a difference in the school.
2. If the school policy is missing some components or they seem weak, ask: Why do you think this is missing from our school's policy? How could we strengthen this component in our policy?
3. If there are items on you "Added to Our Bullying Policy" list, note: Some components in our policy weren't required in our state law--do you think they are good additions? Why or why not?
4. Do you think the policy protects the rights of students who are bullied? Why or why not?
5. Does the policy appropriately address what consequences there should be for students who bully? Why or why not?



# STATE ANTI-BULLYING LAWS



6. Does the policy address concerns or needs of students who witness bullying?
7. Do you think our policy helps to create a positive climate at our school? Why or why not?  
What else could be added to strengthen our policy?

## Wrap Up:

"Anti-bullying laws are found in almost every state across the country, but these laws vary in important ways from state to state. Policy-makers are continually looking for ways to improve these laws. Summarize any suggestions that the students had for strengthening their state law.

These laws usually require school districts like ours to develop anti-bullying policies. Just as the laws vary from state to state, school district policies vary from one to another--often even within the same state. Some are much more complete and effective than others. Summarize students' assessments of their own school's (or school district's) policy and suggestions they had for improvements.

It is very important that we all are aware of the content of our state law and our school district policy about bullying. The law and policy outline our rights to learn and interact in an environment free of bullying and also our responsibilities to help create the most positive climate possible in this school."

## CURRICULUM CONNECTION:

**History/Civics:** Link this class meeting to lessons about how legislation is drafted/passed in your state and explore the process that the anti-bullying law went through. Students may be encouraged to write to state legislators about concerns they have about their state's anti-bullying law (or lack of a law) and provide specific suggestions for improvement.

**English:** Students could choose a point of view about whether state laws in general or their state law in particular actually prevents/protects students against bullying and support their point of view with facts and examples.

**Foreign Language:** Encourage students to research how other countries or cultures define or describe bullying behavior. Are there differences in ways other cultures view behaviors we refer to

# STATE ANTI-BULLYING LAWS



**Extracurricular Activity/Student Government:** Students may draft their own anti-bullying legislation. Hold a mock "Senate Debate" in which students prepare and give oral arguments to support why their legislations should be passed.

**Extracurricular Activity/Community Service:** Students may research whether or not other countries have anti-bullying laws. If they do, what protections do students in other countries have regarding bullying in school? If your school has an exchange student project in another country, have students communicate with each other about these issues.

# STATE ANTI-BULLYING LAWS



KEY COMPONENT	IN OUR LAW?		
	YES	NO	IN PART
Purpose Statement: Outlines the negative effects of bullying; declares that any form or amount of bullying is unacceptable and must be taken seriously.			
Statement of Scope: Covers behavior that happens on school grounds, at school-sponsored activities (no matter what their location), on buses, or through school-owned technology or technology outside of school that disrupts the school environment.			
<p>Specifies Behavior That Is Prohibited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a specific and easily understood definition of bullying and cyberbullying (or electronic bullying).</li> <li>• The definition includes a list of behaviors that are direct or indirect</li> <li>• The definition is NOT limited to physical bullying but indicates that bullying also may be verbal or nonverbal</li> <li>• The law prohibits retaliation against someone for reporting bullying.</li> <li>• The law prohibits spreading mean material (forwarding mean emails or text messages) even if someone else created it</li> </ul>			
<p>List Special Characteristics of Bullied Students:</p> <p>Explain that bullying may include but is not limited to acts that are based on characteristics (real or perceived) of students who are often targets of bullying (such as race, color, religion, gender, or disabilities)</p>			
Definitions: The law states that school districts must include in their policy a definition of bullying that is consistent with the state's law.			

# STATE ANTI-BULLYING LAWS



KEY COMPONENT	IN OUR LAW?		
	YES	NO	IN PART
Development and Implementation of District Policies: The law directs every school district (or country) to develop and implement a policy that prohibits bullying. The policy should be developed in a way that includes input from school administrators, staff, students, families, and the community.			
Reporting Bullying: The law states that school district policies must include procedures for students, families, staff, and others to report bullying anonymously. The procedure identifies which school staff member(s) are responsible for receiving reports and investigating. The policy makes clear that school personnel must report incidents of bullying that they witness or are aware of.			
Investigation and Responding to Bullying: The law states that school district policies must include a procedure of promptly investigating and responding to all reports of bullying, including immediate interventions to protect the victim, notification or parents, and, if appropriate, notification of law enforcement officials.			
Written Records: The law states that school district policies must include a procedure for keeping written records of all instances of bullying and how they were resolved.			
Sanctions: The law states that school district policies must include a good description of possible consequences for students who bully others. There should be a range of possible consequences.			

# STATE ANTI-BULLYING LAWS



KEY COMPONENT	IN OUR LAW?		
	YES	NO	IN PART
Referrals: The law states that school district policies should include a procedure for referring the student who is bullied, the student who bullied, and others to counseling services, if needed.			
Review of School District Policies: The law includes a statement that the state will review school district policies on a regular basis to make sure that the goals of the state law are being met.			
Communication Plan: The law includes a plan to notify students, families, and staff of policies related to bullying.			
Training and Prevention: The law includes a statement that training will be provided for all staff--including teachers, aides, support staff, and bus drivers--so that they can prevent, identify, and respond to bullying. The law encourages school districts to implement school-wide and community wide bullying prevention programs			
Transparency and Monitoring: The law requires school districts to send a report to the state each year about the number of reported bullying incidents and responses to these incidents. The law requires districts to make summary data about the numbers of bullying incidents available to the public.			



# THE CYBER SIDE



<b>LESSON NAME:</b>	<b>THE CYBER SIDE OF ANTI-BULLYING RULES</b>
<b>Grade Level:</b>	Middle School
<b>Background:</b>	<p>Although bullying through the electronic forms of communication (also known as cyber bullying) is less common than more traditional forms of bullying, both face-to-face bullying and cyber bullying are harmful. Children and youth who are bullied face-to-face and through electronic media are more likely than non-bullied children to experience depression, anxiety, low-self esteem, and suicidal thoughts. Cyber bullying can be more difficult to monitor and control since it often takes place away from school, since those who cyber bully often are anonymous, and because teens are often more adept at using the electronic devices and social networking media than adults.</p> <p>The purpose of this lesson is to help students see that cyber bullying is a harmful form of communication and that they have critical roles to play in reducing its spread and helping those who are cyber bullied. Teachers may want to allow more than one session for this topic to allow thorough student discussion.</p>
<b>Goals:</b>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• describe common forms of cyber bullying.</li><li>• identify similarities and differences between cyber bullying and traditional forms of bullying.</li><li>• identify the negative effects that cyber bullying can have on teens.</li></ul>
<b>Materials:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Poster or projection of the Box Out Bullying Anti-Bullying Rules if they are not already posted in your classroom</li><li>• The Cyber Side of Anti-Bullying Rules, one per group</li><li>• Pencils</li></ul>

## LESSON PROCEDURE:

### Set Up:

Print The Cyber Side of Anti-Bullying Rules. Each group will need a copy.

Introduction: (15 minutes)

Post or project the BOBPP rules against bullying in front of the class.

**"We are all familiar with the Box Out Bullying Anti-Bullying Rules. Today we are going to look at how they apply to cyber bullying.**

**Let's look at the first rule--"We will not bully others"--and talk about how it relates to cyber bullying:**

- **What is cyber bullying?** (Bullying through email, instant messaging, chat rooms, websites, or digital images or messages sent to a cell phone.)
- **What are some specific examples of cyber bullying?** (Sending rude or offensive messages, distributing or posting derogatory information about another on a social networking site, sending digitally altered photos, impersonating another and sending offensive messages as if you were that person, tricking someone into revealing embarrassing information and then forwarding it to others.)
- **How can people be bullied through gaming?** (By sending mean messages or spreading rumors about fellow online players.)
- **How is cyber bullying the same as bullying in person?** (Cyber bullying shares three components of face-to-face bullying: (1) aggressive behavior, (2) power imbalance, (3) often repeated [repetition in cyberspace may be a bit different--bullying may be repeated by forwarding a message to others, having many view a posting]; many of the same students who cyber bully are involved in more traditional forms of bullying.)
- **How is cyber bullying different from bullying in person?** (It can happen any time of the day or night, the person who bullies can be anonymous, we often say or do things online that we wouldn't do in person, it can reach lots of people instantaneously.)
- **What effects might cyber bullying have on students who are targeted? On witnesses?** (Youth who are cyber bullied are more likely than others to experience depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts; bystanders may feel helpless, guilty, or afraid that they may be targeted.)
- **How common do you think cyber bullying is?** Share the following information: A survey on nine hundred middle and high school students found that 6 percent had been cyber bullied and 7 percent had cyber bullied others frequently--two or three times per month or more often.
- **Raise your hand if you are aware of a cyber-bullying incident among people you know."**

# THE CYBER SIDE



## **Activity:** (20 minutes)

1. **You will be working in small groups to do two things. First: discuss the bullying rule you have been assigned and answer the questions on your worksheet. Second, create at least three "Net Notes." These are slogans or "one-liners" that highlight how students can apply this rule to cyber bullying. Write your group's Net Notes on that section of your worksheet.**
2. Divide the class into small groups of four or five students. Give each group a copy of The Cyber Side of Anti-Bullying Rules. Assign each group one of the three remaining anti-bullying rules. One person will record the group's answers to the discussion questions, and one will present the Net Notes to the large group.

## **Discussion:** (15 minutes)

1. Bring the class together.
2. Call on each group, beginning with the group(s) assigned rule 2, to share their answers and Net Notes. Continue for rules 3 and 4.
3. Record the Net Notes on the board, have students post them on the board, or collect them to compile into a larger list.
4. Why is it important to raise awareness about the harm caused by cyber bullying? How can we use these Net Notes in efforts to raise awareness about cyber bullying among students in our school?
5. Younger students are greatly influenced by the ideas and behavior of high school students. How might we use these Net Notes to raise awareness about cyber bullying among middle and elementary school students? (Post them on the school website, create public-service-style announcements, create posters, etc.)

## **Wrap Up:**

"Both face-to-face bullying and cyber bullying can be harmful. Our school's anti-bullying rules remind us how we should treat each other--online or offline. Whether we start it, watch it, read it, pass it on, or stop it--we are involved."

Summarize key messages from the Net Notes and/or student discussion.

## CURRICULUM CONNECTION:

**History/Civics:** Have students research and give reports on ways that technological advances have altered cultural norms about privacy, ethics, public access to people or information, and civility. Students may also compare/contrast the Industrial Revolution with the technological revolution.

**Social Science/Sociology:** Ask students to interview an adult who was a teenager before 1990. They should prepare interview questions to identify whether and how technology played a role in the person's teenage relationships. Have students compare and contrast these responses with the experience of teens today.

**Information Technology:** Ask students to prepare a multimedia presentation for adults that explains how to use social networking sites and how to protect against cyber bullying.

**Civics/Service Learning:** Invite students to develop a mini-public information campaign for middle school students on cyber bullying. They can use their Net Notes as a starting point.

# THE CYBER SIDE



## RULE 1: WE WILL NOT BULLY OTHERS

1. What kinds of things are done online or on cell phones that are examples of bullying? Give specific examples.

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2. Is the impact of cyber bullying the same as bullying in person?

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3. Why is it important that we consider our actions online in a similar way to how we act in person?

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## RULE 2: WE WILL TRY TO HELP STUDENTS WHO ARE BULLIED

1. How is helping someone who is cyber bullied similar to and different from helping someone who is bullied in person? Give specific examples.

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2. If we see that someone is bullied on a website, how can we help them? What If we don't know them?

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# THE CYBER SIDE



3. If we receive text messages or photos about someone that constitute cyber bullying, what can we do?

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4. If we receive IMs, emails, photos, or videos that constitute cyber bullying, how can we help the person being bullied?

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5. If a friend tells us he or she is being cyber bullied, how can we support our friend?

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## **RULE 3: WE WILL TRY TO INCLUDE STUDENTS WHO ARE LEFT OUT**

1. How can people be excluded online?

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2. How can people be excluded using cell phones?

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3. If we are aware of exclusion online or through cell phones, how can we help?

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# THE CYBER SIDE



4. How can we invite students to join in online?

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5. How can we use the Internet to include or encourage students who are being bullied?

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**RULE 4: IF WE KNOW THAT SOMEBODY IS BEING BULLIED, WE WILL TELL AN ADULT AT SCHOOL AND AN ADULT AT HOME**

1. Who is a person at school that could help you? What other adult could you talk to?

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2. What steps should you take when reporting cyber bullying?

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3. How could you report the bullying activity to the website or social networking site?

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4. How can parents help if someone is being cyber bullied?

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# THE CYBER SIDE



5. What would you expect an adult to do if they were made aware that someone was being cyber bullied?

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6. Why might you hesitate to tell an adult if you or someone you knew was being cyber bullied? What would help you to overcome those reasons and get an adult to help you?

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**NET NOTES FOR RULE # \_\_\_\_\_**

- 1.** 

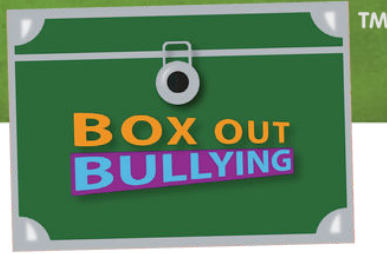
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- 2.** 

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- 3.** 

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- 4.** 

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- 5.** 

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2

**I will try to help  
students who are bullied.**

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# CONSIDER THE UNDERDOG



<b>LESSON NAME:</b>	<b>Consider the Underdog</b>
<b>Grade Level:</b>	Middle School
<b>Background:</b>	<p>Life is full of stories of underdogs tackling and triumphing over the obstacles they face. Sometimes, underdogs achieve spectacular success and fame, but there are millions of people who struggle against great odds who do not become famous or "win." Sometimes, we root for people who are in a position of disadvantage, but other times those people go unnoticed, unless someone steps up as their champion or supporter.</p> <p>The purpose of this lesson is to encourage teens to explore the various aspects of being an underdog, to consider the feelings involved with being on the "losing side" of a situation, and to tap into their sense of justice and altruism and find ways to support others (including their peers) who may be at a disadvantage. From a bullying prevention perspective, the notion of rooting for the underdog can be helpful in encouraging students to stand up for the person being bullied, and to consider ways they can provide encouragement and support each other.</p>
<b>Goals:</b>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• describe what it means to be an underdog.</li><li>• describe the common experience of facing the "uphill climb" or challenges in life.</li><li>• discuss what internal and external factors help us move forward emotionally, spiritually, and physically when we face challenges.</li><li>• discuss how teens can support and encourage each other.</li></ul>
<b>Materials:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Consider the Underdog questions, one per student</li><li>• Underdog examples, included</li><li>• Reference material to help students understand their assigned underdog</li><li>• Pencils</li></ul>

## LESSON PROCEDURE:

### Set Up:

Identify examples from current events or history (in the sciences, the arts, math, music, social reform, medicine, movies, TV shows, sports, and literature) to illustrate two types of underdogs:



# CONSIDER THE UNDERDOG



(1) people or teams who were not expected to prevail and (2) individuals who had little status in society who became successful. Read the examples provided on pages 98-99 of this manual and decide which you would like your students to use for the activity.

Print consider the Under Underdog Questions. Each student will need a copy.

## **Introduction:**

**"What is an 'underdog'?"** After students answer the question, provide a definition that highlights the two contrasting aspects of what an underdog is: (1) A competitor thought to have little chance of winning a fight or contest, and (2) A person who has little status in society.

Highlight these two distinct aspects of the definition in a brief discussion. As students respond to the following questions, record their answers to use later as talking points:

- **Why do you think we sometimes cheer or root for the underdog? Give some examples you can think of. What makes them appealing?** (Shared experiences, gives us hope and encouragement that we can also experience success.)
- **Are "underdogs" always sympathetic or lovable or are there underdogs that no one supports? What are some examples you can think of? What might make it harder to support of "champion" some underdogs?** (They have characteristics that are hard to like or understand, they might be considered "difficult" personalities, they might be part of a group that society doesn't accept or think well of.) **What makes an underdog less appealing in those situations?**

"We tend to think of or know most about underdogs in sports or politics, but in fact there are many examples of underdogs in current events, history, and even our own personal lives. Today, we're going to think about the two different groups of underdogs based on the definition we just discussed. Some may have been successful, others not. We're going to work in groups to talk about what contributes to the success of an underdog--especially what role bystanders, supporters, and defenders can play."

## **Activity:**

# CONSIDER THE UNDERDOG



1. Divide the class into small groups, and provide each student with a copy of Consider the Underdog Questions and a pencil.
2. Assign underdogs who were competitors thought to have little chance of winning a fight or contest to half the groups. Include some who were successful or popular, and some who were not.
3. Assign underdogs who had little status in society to the other half. Include some who succeeded, and some who did not; especially include some who could easily have failed if no one had supported them or their cause and some who were perhaps despised.
4. Use the examples on pages 98-99 for some ideas for each category.
5. Give groups 15 to 20 minutes to discuss their examples and write down their ideas on the worksheet.

## **Discussion:**

1. Have each group present the person's (or team, army, followers, etc.) name and how the person was an underdog. Emphasize why individuals were able to succeed (persistence, support network, skills or talents, encouragement or positive support or direction, opportunities) or what obstacles prevented their success (stereotypes, oppression, lack of education or opportunities, lack of support.).
2. What kinds of support do you think are most critical for underdogs to succeed? Does it make a difference if they are disadvantaged or marginalized in some way?
3. How do these stories relate to the lives of teens in high school? Who are the underdogs? Encourage students to give characteristics or general groups, rather than names of individuals.
4. What things could we keep in mind about how we can help and support each other in reaching our goals? How can we apply the positive feelings we have for "popular underdogs" to groups of underdogs who are not commonly treated well or supported?
5. How do you think that successful underdogs might look back on their high school experiences? What advice might they give to the people who didn't believe in them or who mistreated them?
6. How would you want your teenage self to be remembered ten (or twenty) years from now?

## **Wrap Up:**

"Many of us feel like the underdog at times. But sometimes, people are at a real disadvantage.

# CONSIDER THE UNDERDOG



We know that those who do well in life are usually those who have support and encouragement from at least a few friends and significant adults in their lives.

When we see underdogs in movies, sports games, TV shows, books, and real life, often our instinct is to root for them. We often want to see people succeed in spite of the obstacles or odds stacked against them.

We can be a part of encouraging and supporting each other in high school so that we all have a "shot" at reaching our goals."

# THE HONORABLE INTERNET



<b>LESSON NAME:</b>	<b>THE HONORABLE INTERNET</b>
<b>Grade Level:</b>	Middle School
<b>Background:</b>	<p>Teenagers today are more plugged into technology than ever before. Much of their communication with their friends, and even their families, takes place electronically. The average American teenager spends twenty-seven hours online each week and sends or receives fifty or more text messages each day. According to recent surveys, 91 percent of teenagers have an email address, 60 percent have an instant messaging (IM) screen name, 75 percent have their own cell phones, and 72 percent have a profile on a social networking site.</p> <p>Though we expect that most teens have learned social guidelines and are able to engage others in polite and respectful ways in person, these face-to-face interpersonal strategies don't necessarily translate to the online world. Surveys indicate that 18 percent of students claim they have been cyber bullied at least once within a several-month period. The purpose of this lesson is to help students understand ethical dilemmas they may face when interacting electronically, and how they can take responsibility for their actions and respond to these dilemmas.</p>
<b>Goals:</b>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identify the ways teens communicate electronically.</li><li>• define ethics, ethical dilemma, and ethical behavior.</li><li>• identify ethical dilemmas they may face when interacting with others electronically.</li><li>• identify their personal responsibilities regarding how to treat others using the Internet and other technologies</li></ul>
<b>Materials:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Honorable Internet Situations and Discussion Questions</li><li>• Pencils</li></ul>

## LESSON PROCEDURE:

### Set Up:

Select four or five of the situations from the list that you think will be of most interest to your class. Give each small group two situations to discuss, then bring the groups together to discuss their situations and responses.

# THE HONORABLE INTERNET



## Introduction: (10 minutes)

1. How many text messages would you estimate that you send to your friends and family each day?
2. How many of you use a computer to communicate with your friends or family? How many of you have a profile on a social networking website like Facebook or Instagram or Twitter?
3. Have you ever been faced with a difficult situation regarding an email or a website and didn't know what to do? For example, you come across a website created solely for the purpose of humiliating someone, or you receive an email that contains malicious rumors about someone.
4. Our first inclination is to think of these situations in terms of fairness. Is it fair that these kinds of things are happening? As we mature, we begin to see "fairness" linked to ethics.
5. What is ethics? (Ethics is the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation [merriam-webster.com/dictionary]. In other words, ethics pertains to moral principles, a philosophy relating to human conduct—the "rightness" and "wrongness" of certain actions.)
6. What is an ethical dilemma? What is ethical behavior?
7. Although we have the tools to communicate electronically, learning how to manage our communications in respectful, considerate, civil, fair, or ethical ways has become more of a challenge. Often, it's a matter of taking responsibility for our actions as we communicate electronically. Today we're going to try to tackle these tough issues.

## Activity: (20 minutes)

1. **We're going to discuss some situations that you might face when using the Internet and technology that potentially pose ethical dilemmas — some situations may pose more than one dilemma. I'll read them aloud and pose questions that I'd like you to consider and discuss for each situation.**
2. Read your selected situations one at a time. Encourage careful consideration and thoughtful discussion using the questions included with each situation.
3. Keep a running list of options on the board or chart paper for each situation discussed. At the end of the discussion, have students evaluate whether some options are more ethical than others. Put an asterisk by those and summarize that these could help them make ethical choices when faced with similar situations in the future.

## Discussion: (10 minutes)



# THE HONORABLE INTERNET



1. If this activity was done in small groups, encourage students to discuss the group responses and add and expand on them.
2. **Would you estimate that you communicate more with technology or with face-to-face communication?**
3. **How is communication using electronic technology the same as face-to-face communication? How is it different?**
4. **Describe times when the use of technology may have been frustrating to you, a friend, or a family member because it interfered with a face-to-face conversation.**

## Wrap Up:

"Communication has changed dramatically with technological advances in recent years.

The rapid advancement of technology such as the Internet and personal cell phones has given us the ability to find and say and send information in ways we could have only imagined just a decade ago. No doubt, the way we communicate will be altered greatly in the next decade with further advances in technology. The unchanging truth is that we have the power to harm others and even ourselves if we aren't using communication tools ethically.

Think about your personal ethics (your sense of right and wrong) before you click send, forward, or post. The way you handle electronic communication says a lot about your cyber ethics and you as a person!"

## **CURRICULUM CONNECTION:**

**English:** Have Students, read samples the New: York Times column "The Ethicist." Have them suggest an ethical action to be taken based off ethical dilemma discussed in this class meeting.

**Civics:** Examine Supreme Court cases on free speech and cyber communication (e.g., WikiLeaks). Have students form mock Supreme Court teams to debate the issues in these cases. Have students teams write out their opinions in a format similar to that used by actual justices.

**Debate:** Suggest that students use situations: in this class determine topics for debates. Research could be used to help support their opposing views.

# THE HONORABLE INTERNET



## THE HONORABLE INTERNET SITUATIONS

**Instructions:** Print this document and cut apart the situations. Each small group will need two situations.



### Situation 1:

I've had some personal things going on that I really needed to talk to my close friend about. We've always really felt it was important to discuss things with one another. I know I can really trust him to keep things confidential, and talking usually helps a lot. But when we met the other day, as soon as I started talking about my situation, my friend kept looking at his cell phone, texting people back and forth. I was hurt and mad that I couldn't have the full attention that I really needed. And I was hoping for some advice, too. I guess I understand why my mom gets so angry when I bring my cell phone to the dinner table.

### Situation 2:

I'm not a cyber bully or anything like that. If someone sends me an email or a text message that has a rumor in it, but I think I'm actually passing on true information, I'm not guilty of anything.

### Situation 3:

What I write on my profile page or Facebook page is personal. It's my page so I get to write what I want on it. If somebody's feelings get hurt, it's their own fault—they don't have to read it.

### Situation 4:

I know lots of people who say or do things online that I know they wouldn't if they were talking to someone in person. It's how you are in person that counts the most. Or is it?

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# THE HONORABLE INTERNET



## THE HONORABLE INTERNET SITUATIONS



### Situation 5:

My best friend and I know each other's email passwords. I found out friend used my account to send emails to other people, so they thought they were from me. These emails were kind of nasty, but my friend insists that it was just a joke, that I'm making a big deal out of nothing, and that it's my own fault since I gave out my password. We'll see how she feels when I do it back!

### Situation 6:

I'm really overweight and I'm really self-conscious about it. I told someone I considered my friend how much I weighed and she tweeted it so now everyone knows! I'm so embarrassed and I'm so angry!

### Situation 7:

Someone in our school started this website where the guys rated the girls—who's the hottest and who's not. I don't know who started it, and lots of kids have visited the site and rated the girls, including some of my friends. I'm feeling bad that I even know about this website, as it has caused a lot of hurt feelings. I don't know what to do about it.

### Situation 8:

There's a boy at school who gets teased a lot. A couple of my friends got his cell phone number and are talking about sending him some texts and pretending to have a crush on him. I know it's mean, but I don't want to say anything and have my friends get mad at me.

### Situation 9:

Somebody is sending out malicious emails about this boy in my school who everybody thinks is gay. People are mean to him in school and this is getting really bad now. I don't take part in any of it and I don't want to. But I'm getting these emails, too, and I don't want to be involved. I know that by getting them I am involved, but I don't know what to do.

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# NO ROOM FOR RUMORS



<b>LESSON NAME:</b>	<b>NO ROOM FOR RUMORS</b>
<b>Grade Level:</b>	Middle School
<b>Background:</b>	<p>Communication between individuals in a classroom can become complicated when rumors and gossip are common. In a survey of more than five hundred thousand students in grades 3 to 12 across the United States, rumor-spreading was found to be the second-most-common form of bullying for both boys and girls. Fifteen percent of girls and 13 percent of boys reported that others had frequently spread rumors about them (two or three times a month or more often). Older students are more sophisticated in their ability to use words over actions to harm others, making their efforts more subtle and difficult for adults to detect. Whether or not rumors are true, words not only can hurt someone's feelings but also can destroy friendships and damage reputations, sometimes irreparably and with tragic results. Rumor-spreading is an indirect form of aggression that may even originate from within a student's friendship group. Because of increased access to electronic communications, rumors spread online to a larger number of individuals can have a devastating impact.</p> <p>Because adults often are unaware of gossip that takes place (particularly online), rumor management depends heavily on building students' realization that they have a choice to either repeat the rumors and keep them alive or to not repeat or forward rumors and thereby help stop their spread. The purpose of this lesson is to help students use critical thinking skills that support making the important choice to stop and even counteract rumors, as well as to develop some concrete strategies they can use.</p>
<b>Goals:</b>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• determine what kinds of behaviors constitute spreading rumors and gossip.</li><li>• use critical thinking skills to help them determine what options for dealing with rumors and gossip might be best in a particular situation.</li><li>• explore several strategies to help stop rumors and gossip and minimize their effects whenever possible.</li></ul>
<b>Materials:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No Room for Rumors quotations and questions</li><li>• No Room for Rumors Worksheet, one per student</li><li>• Chart paper or board</li><li>• Pencils</li></ul>

# NO ROOM FOR RUMORS



## LESSON PROCEDURE:

### Set Up:

Choose one or two quotes from the list of quotations to use in the introduction. Questions are provided to stimulate student discussion. Print No Room for Rumors Worksheet. Each student will need a copy. Prepare board or chart space for recording student answers for the introduction, activity, and discussion.

### Introduction: (10 minutes)

"Today we're going to talk about the ways that information is shared or spread about students. We're going to focus on gossip and rumors and the potential impact they can have not just on the students being talked about, but on our school as a whole.

Let's start by talking about gossip and rumors." Write the words Rumors and Gossip on the board, with room to write student responses underneath each.

- **What are rumors?** Write student responses on the board under Rumors.
- **How would you define gossip?** Write student ideas on the board under Gossip.
- **In your opinion, what is the difference between gossip and rumors? In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different?** Draw arrows between similarities; put asterisks by ways that they are different. (Rumor: hearsay, information in general circulation, lack of confirmation of facts, fiction. Gossip: casual talk, often about private matters of others, information may be true or not.)
- **How would you describe the difference between an opinion and a rumor?** (An opinion is a belief or judgement that rests on grounds insufficient to produce complete certainty; a personal view, attitude, or appraisal.)

"Here is a quotation about rumors: 'Rumors are hearsay; they are told, believed, and passed on not because of the weight of evidence but because of the expectations by tellers that they are true in the first place.'" (Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, Moral Panics)

- **How does this compare to the points we came up with as a class?**
- **What do you think motivates people to spread rumors?**
- **What do you think motivates some people to decide not to spread rumors?**



# NO ROOM FOR RUMORS



"Let's look at some other quotes about gossip." Read the quotes you have selected, one at a time. Use the questions provided to encourage students to talk about key issues such as ways gossip affects others, who has responsibility for the spread of rumors, and what can be done to counteract rumors.

## **Activity:** (20 minutes)

- 1. When we are faced with gossip or rumors--whether we are the subject of it or the recipient--it can be hard to know the best way to handle the situation. Like many other issues we've talked about in class meetings, there really isn't a single answer or a simple solution to the problem.**
- 2. We need strategies or personal guidelines for helping us decide the best course of action in a particular situation. It's good to be prepared ahead of time as to what we might be able to do.**
- 3. It's important to keep in mind that whenever we are faced with gossip, we always have choices or options about what to do. First, you can choose whether to pass the information on to others or not. If you decide not to pass it on, what are some options you have?** Write students' ideas on chart paper or the board under the heading Options. (Some options: Ignore it. Delete it if it's a text--do not send it on to others. Find out how it got started; try to talk to the person or the group of people and ask them to stop. Tell the person who is being talked about so they know what is being said. Find a way to comfort or show support or solidarity to the person being gossiped about. Start a "positive" rumor or fact that counteracts the rumor. Ask friends or others you trust to find ways to counteract the gossip. Report the gossip to a trusted adult. Ask someone you trust for advice. Reach out in friendship to the person who is being talked about to help them through a rough time.) You may need to help teens think about various options. List at least seven or eight using suggestions from above if necessary. After you have options listed, ask students to vote for the top five options (exclude ignore or delete options). Number the options from 1 to 5.
- 4. Divide the class into five small groups and assign one of the options to each group. Give each student a copy of the No Room for Rumors Worksheet to record their responses.**
- 5. Write the option you have been assigned on your worksheet. Discuss the option in your small groups:**
  - Ask yourselves the six questions to consider and answer them as honestly as possible.
  - Next, brainstorm different ways that you could implement this option. Write down at least three suggestions for specific things you could say or do. Allow 10 minutes for discussion.

# NO ROOM FOR RUMORS



## **Discussion:** (10 minutes)

1. Bring the class together. Call on each small group to state their option for action and to share at least one suggestion for implementing the option. Consider compiling and distributing student suggestions to post or distribute to the class. Some artistic students might want to design posters listing options for dealing with rumors.
2. If a rumor has been started about you, which of these options would you want your friends to do to help?
3. What would you want the adults in your school to do if rumors were being spread about you?
4. What might prevent you from talking to others about a rumor spread about you?
5. Would you tell your parents about rumors being spread? Why or why not?
6. If you told your parents, what would you want them to do to help?

## **Wrap Up:**

"In spreading rumors or gossip, no one comes out a winner. There is no doubt that words can hurt, whether they come directly from someone's mouth or whether they are spread electronically.

Before you choose to spread a rumor or even listen to one, ask yourself: What is my motive in becoming involved? Use the good ideas we talked about today to decide what options you have in a given situation to help put a stop to gossip and rumors.

Here is one last quotation to ponder:

'There is so much good in the worst of us,  
And so much bad in the best of us,  
That it hardly behooves any of us,  
To talk about the rest of of us'  
- Author Unknown"

# NO ROOM FOR RUMORS



## CURRICULUM CONNECTION:

**Civics/History:** Explore how rumors have influenced politics or government policy and the personal lives of public figures. (Clinton Whitewater scandal, rumors that President Obama was not a citizen of the United States, rumors about the Apollo moon landing, rumors about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.)

**English:** Have students write an essay to support or refute the following statement: Rumors are intended to silence the person being rumored about.

**Civics/Current Events:** Instruct students to research websites and organizations dedicated to finding out whether politicians and the media are telling the truth. (For example, [stinkyjournalism.org](http://stinkyjournalism.org), or [factcheck.org](http://factcheck.org).) Or investigate the impact of organizations that release unauthorized information to the public (such as WikiLeaks). Discuss whether they believe it's always appropriate to make such information available and what responsibility organizations have when they do.

**Math:** Help students analyze data about the prevalence of rumors and gossip from their school's most recent Olweus Bullying Questionnaire or compare the data from the most recent questionnaire to those of past years.

**Art:** Suggest that students create posters on the theme "Does it Pass the Rumor Test?" to promote critical thinking before passing a rumor on.

# NO ROOM FOR RUMORS



## QUOTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

The following quotations are divided into three different themes. Read one or two quotations to your students. Use the questions as talking points to help students examine the impact of gossip and rumors and to consider options they might have when confronted by them. Use additional quotes during other lessons as time permits.

### Impact of Rumors and Gossip

"No sword bites so fiercely as an evil tongue."

--Sir Philip Sydney

1. Do you agree that the effect of words can be as painful or cause as much injury to someone as a physical hurt?
2. What do you think the author means by "an evil tongue"? Are gossip and rumors always intended to hurt others?
3. If gossip and rumors are so hurtful, why do you think people engage in them?
4. Do you think that whether someone intends to be hurtful in spreading gossip or rumors is what really matters?

"It isn't what they say about you, it's what they whisper."

--Errol Flynn

1. What kinds of things get whispered about as opposed to things people are willing to say outright?
2. Is what people say directly to you easier or harder to deal with than something said behind your back? Why do you think so?

"Rumor travels faster, but it don't stay put as long as truth."

--Will Rogers

1. What does Will Rogers mean when he says that rumor travels faster than truth?
2. Do you agree that the truth will be around longer than the rumor?

# NO ROOM FOR RUMORS



"Cure the tongue whence slanderous rumour, like the adder's drops, distills her venom, withering friendship's faith, turning love's favour."

--James W. Hillhouse

1. What does this quote say about the effect of gossip on friendships and relationships?
2. Why do you think Hillhouse uses the analogy of rumors being like snake venom?
3. Are rumors always spread with the intention to hurt? Are there other reasons?

## **Motivation and Responsibility for Gossip and Rumors**

"Three may keep a secret, if two of them are dead."

--Benjamin Franklin, Poor Richard's Almanack, July 1735

1. Do you agree? Have you ever been asked to promise not to tell anyone before hearing a rumor? Is it easy or difficult to keep such promises?
2. Are there ever times when it might be important not to keep a secret?
3. If you have to reveal something personal about someone else, what are ways you can be most helpful?

"No one gossips about other people's secret virtues."

--Bertrand Arthur William Russell

1. Do you agree with this observation?
2. What are some ways "positive" gossip could be used to counteract negative things that might be said about someone else or to correct misinformation?

"If you reveal your secrets to the wind, you should not blame the wind for revealing them to the trees."

--Kahlil Gibran, Sand and Foam

1. Why do you think Gibran means you are to blame if you confide in someone and they reveal private information?
2. What ways might this give us insights about what information we decide to share or reveal about ourselves with others?



# NO ROOM FOR RUMORS



"Trying to squash a rumor is like trying to un-ring a bell."

--Shana Alexander

1. In your experience, do you agree with this quote?
2. What makes it hard to "take back" something, once a rumor is spread?
3. If a rumor is spread about you, what might you do to try to counteract it?

"Whoever gossips to you will gossip about you."

--Spanish proverb

1. Do you think this is true?
2. Why do people keep confidences sometimes and not others? Gossip about some things and not others?
3. How does the saying "take it with a grain of salt" apply to this quote?

"A cruel story runs on wheels, and every hand oils the wheels as they run."

--Ouida

1. What does this author believe about the way rumors spread?
2. Do you think the person who starts a rumor is more or less responsible for its effect than someone who passes it along?
3. What responsibility do people have who simply ignore a rumor and do nothing at all?

"Rumors are like ripples in a cornfield. They are ephemeral, but they do indicate which way the wind is blowing."

--Susan J. Palmer, Aliens Adored

1. Does the visual image of wind blowing through a cornfield describe the way you see gossip and rumors occurring in our school? Would you use a different analogy to describe the way rumors can be spread using technology?
2. Explain what the author means about rumors indicating "which way the wind is blowing."
3. What does that imply about responsibility for choosing to spread or stop a rumor?

# NO ROOM FOR RUMORS



## Strategies for Dealing with Gossip and Rumors

This section of quotations poses options for ways of responding to gossip and rumors. Ask students to consider these and decide whether or not they feel these are useful suggestions and, if so, circumstances where a particular option might be useful. The primary goal is to encourage students to (1) view their responses to gossip and rumors as personal choice (to perpetuate it or to stop it) and (2) consider a range of options they might have available to them in any given situation.

"Never tell evil of a man, if you do not know it for certainty, then ask yourself, 'Why should I tell it?'"

--Johann K. Lavater

"If it's very painful for you to criticize your friends--you're safe in doing it. But if you take the slightest pleasure in it, that's the time to hold your tongue."

--Alice Duer Miller

"If you haven't got anything nice to say about somebody, don't say anything at all."

--Anonymous

1. Have you heard this one before, perhaps from a parent, a grandparent, or guardian?
2. Is it a good advice? Why or why not?

(If you need some humor in your class meeting, you might quote the remake of the above quote: "If you haven't got anything nice to say about anybody, come sit next to me." Alice Roosevelt Longworth)

1. Are there people who love to hear rumors as a form of entertainment?
2. Are there people who will spread rumors about "anybody"?

# PEER LEADERSHIP



<b>LESSON NAME:</b>	<b>DEVELOPING PEER LEADERSHIP</b>
<b>Grade Level:</b>	Middle School
<b>Background:</b>	Students will discover what it means to be an effective leader.
<b>Goals:</b>	Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• learn the importance of leadership skills and how to develop their own.</li><li>• analyze their existing leadership skills and determine what they can improve upon.</li></ul>
<b>Materials:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-Analysis Leadership Inventory Worksheet</li></ul>

## LESSON PROCEDURE:

### Introduction:

Discuss the following **Guidelines for Developing Leadership Skills** with your students.

### **Four Ways to be a Good Leader:**

1. Set an example by what you do and say.
2. Set a spirit of cooperation.
3. Learn to problem solve using creative ideas.
4. Listen to others and speak out when necessary.

### **Importance of Developing Leadership Skills:**

1. It helps to focus on a specific task and contributes to group goals.
2. It helps the person grow personally, academically, and socially.

### **Effective Leaders are Excellent Communicators:**

1. Leaders have the ability to be heard and understood.
2. Leaders' enthusiasm is contagious.
3. Leaders are team players.

# PEER LEADERSHIP



## **Effective Leaders Help Develop Team Spirit by Promoting:**

- Friendliness
- Understanding
- Good will
- Fairness
- Enthusiasm

## **Activity:**

Have your students complete the Self-Analysis Leadership Inventory Worksheet, which is on the following page.

## **Discussion:**

Discuss their results. Ask what are some skills students feel they can build upon.

# PEER LEADERSHIP



## SELF-ANALYSIS LEADERSHIP INVENTORY

Draw a circle around yes or no and draw your own conclusions about your leadership style.

Do I help solve problems?	YES	NO
Am I a team player?	YES	NO
Do I consider what others think and feel?	YES	NO
Am I a good communicator?	YES	NO
Do I accept responsibility for the things I do?	YES	NO
Do I help others do the best they can?	YES	NO
Do I ask for help when I need it?	YES	NO
Am I a good listener?	YES	NO
Do I look for ways to improve my school?	YES	NO
Do I look for ways to improve my community?	YES	NO
Do I help others find solutions for concerns?	YES	NO
It is important to be popular.	YES	NO
I have done something positive for my school.	YES	NO
I help plan and organize a school club.	YES	NO



**3 I will try to include  
students who are left out.**

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# GETTING TO KNOW YOU!



<b>LESSON NAME:</b>	<b>GETTING TO KNOW YOU!</b>
<b>Grade Level:</b>	Middle School
<b>Background:</b>	<p>Achieving success at school for teens may depend less on teaching techniques and educational materials, and more on the relationships between an individual and his or her class members. The existence of a welcoming and supportive classroom community can be a critical factor that can increase student motivation and self-esteem. Being part of a positive community can help to reduce anxiety and maximize healthy student interaction in the classroom. A supportive community facilitates cooperation in class and can make teaching and learning an enjoyable experience for teachers and students alike. Whether students have a lot in common or just a little, this meeting is about getting to know other classmates on a more personal level and accepting and respecting them as individuals who are a part of their learning community.</p> <p>This lesson offers two activity options. The second option requires a higher level of communication skills.</p>
<b>Goals:</b>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• observe that all students in their class have something in common with someone else.</li><li>• accept that students have different experiences and points of view.</li><li>• practice asking questions that show interest in others, which can be used to start conversations to get to know someone better.</li><li>• state something they learned about the individuals in their class that they didn't know before participating in this meeting.</li></ul>
<b>Materials:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Getting to Know You! Questions: Activity 1, one copy</li><li>• Getting to Know You! Questions: Activity 2, one copy</li><li>• One blank sheet of paper per student</li><li>• Tape</li><li>• Pencils</li><li>• Bowl or box to place questions in</li><li>• Timer or watch with second hand</li></ul>

# GETTING TO KNOW YOU!



## LESSON PROCEDURE:

### Set Up:

Choose either activity 1 or activity 2. Activity 1 is an easy way to open group conversation for students who don't know each other. Activity 2 requires students to ask and respond to open-ended questions. It gives them time to have conversations with a number of students in the class.

Activity 1: Print Getting to Know You! Questions and cut questions apart. Each student will need one question. Tape each question on a separate sheet of paper with space for students to write their answers below the question. Place one sheet face down on each desk as the activity begins.

Activity 2: Print Getting to Know You! Questions: Activity 2 and cut questions apart. Place questions in a container for students to randomly select.

### Introduction:

"Learning to get to know people is a skill we all have to practice and develop, no matter who we are. It's something we need to make friends, get along at school or work, and develop partner relationships.

Sometimes it's hard to figure out what to say to break the ice when we first meet someone. Or, it can be hard to know what to say to keep a conversation going with people we don't know well.

It's also easy to make assumptions about other people based on what they look like. Those assumptions can get in the way of learning what someone is really like, having a conversations with them, or even just getting along better.

Some of us feel more comfortable socializing than others. So we're going to do an activity that can help us get to know each other better."

### Activity 1: (15 minutes)

"We are going to play a game that will help us get to know what kinds of things we have in common with each other.

# GETTING TO KNOW YOU!



You each have a question on your desk. Take out a pencil and, when I say go, answer the question. Most questions can be answered with one word or a short phrase. We'll look at the answers as a group, so make sure you are okay with everyone seeing your answer.

When you finish, go to another desk and answer that question. Quickly move to any open desks to answer new questions. There should only be one person at a desk at a time."

After 10 to 15 minutes (or when students have finished), tell the class to stop. Each student should take one question page and take a seat in the meeting circle.

## **Discussion: Activity 1**

1. Call on one student to read the question they have and all the responses. Continue going around the circle until each of the questions and responses has been read.
2. **Which questions received a lot of the same or similar answers?** Prompt students to review the sheets they have and count similar responses.
3. **Which questions received many different answers?**
4. **What do these patterns tell you about the people in this class?** (They might think the same way as you about some things and they might think differently about others; we have a lot in common; we have different ways of expressing ourselves; we have similar or different experiences; some people may be more humorous or more unique in some way, but that does not make them "better"; there were no "right" or "wrong" answers.)
5. **What did you learn about the people in this class from doing this exercise?** (One person is not better than another, we all have our own experiences and right to our own opinions, we may all have different perspectives about these questions. We may have different interpretations of a question. We can learn a lot about each other by asking questions. It can be fun to hear what people think and what they've experienced.)
6. **What surprised you more, the things you had in common or the ways you experienced things differently?**
7. **What are different assumptions teens might make about each other without knowing each other that well? Why do you think that happens?**
8. **How can getting to know classmates better help improve the way we work as a class?** (We are more comfortable with each other when we know someone's point of view or something about their life experiences; we can learn to respect each other's perspective on various issues; we know that in spite of our differences, we have a lot in common with each other; we can

# GETTING TO KNOW YOU!



build trust and confidence to share with each other, to help us all experience positive feelings while we are learning together.)

## **Activity 2:** (30 minutes)

Ask each student to draw one question from the container.

Get the entire class on their feet and tell them to find a partner to start the activity. Explain that they will be changing partners several times during this activity. "Please try to find a partner that you don't know well or don't know at all.

Partners, introduce yourselves and then take turns asking each other the question on each of your papers. The person asking the question first is the person whose last name is closer to the beginning of the alphabet. The person answering will talk for about 30 seconds -- then they will ask their partner to answer the question they drew.

After both people have asked and answered their questions, exchange the paper with the question with your partner, and then we'll repeat the activity with a new partner each round. We'll do several rounds. You may get the same question to ask others that you had earlier. That won't matter. Keep up the conversation with your partner until I call 'time.'

For the first two or three rounds, you may need to remind students to ask a question, answer a question, or exchange the paper with the question so that they will have a different question to ask when they find their new partner. Continue for about 25 minutes, and then call time and ask students to return to their meeting circle for discussion.

## **Discussion: Activity 2**

1. What was this experience like? Were some questions harder or easier to ask or answer than others? What were they? Why? (Easier not to have the same questions, the questions were random, sometimes it was hard to answer the question, sometimes I felt shy about answering and sometimes I felt more confident, it made a difference how well I knew the other person.)
2. Ask volunteers to share the most interesting or surprising answers they received.
3. Were any of you surprised at things you had in common with each other? Or were you

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surprised about different experiences or points of view? What are some examples?

4. How can practicing asking and answering questions like this help us feel more comfortable in social situations?
5. What are some examples of questions that might be more appropriate for some settings or situations than others?

## Wrap Up:

"We just found out a little more about each other. There is so much more to learn about each other. When we take the time to get to know each other, we might be surprised to find that we have more in common than differences.

We can build community, a sense of belonging to the group, and trust and confidence to open up real communication with each other, and we can respect each other's views and opinions. That will help us all experience positive feelings while we are learning together."

## CURRICULUM CONNECTION:

**Health/Human Development:** As part of discussions about dating, problem-solve scenarios that explore setting healthy boundaries in relationships. Ask: When people ask you personal questions, how much should you answer? Consider possible links between this discussion and one about cyber safety.

**Social Science/Civics:** Students may debate issues like privacy and confidentiality versus the public right to access information about individuals.

**Foreign Language:** Encourage students to explore the influences of culture on things like privacy or asking/sharing personal information with others.

**English:** Instruct student to write about a book, story, or movie that had a character that was misunderstood by others but later revealed to have surprising character traits or experiences. For example: Jean Valjean or Javert in *Les Misérables*; Boo Radley in *To Kill a Mockingbird*; Elphaba in *Wicked*.



# GETTING TO KNOW YOU!



## ACTIVITY 1: QUESTIONS

**Instructions:** Print this document and cut apart the questions. You will need one question per student. Attach each question to a bank sheet of paper. You may wish to add questions of your own. If students enjoy this activity, they may wish to write questions of their own for a future class meeting.



What is your favorite food group?

If you could be any animal, what would you be

What is your favorite flavor of gum?

If you could have a super power, what would it be?

Who is your favorite performer?

Do you prefer dog, cats, other kinds of animals for pets, or no pets at all?

What is your favorite subject or class in school?

What is a television show that you just can't miss?

How many siblings do you have?

What do you do for exercise?

How old is the oldest person in your family?

What is your favorite song?

Name your two most favorite things.

Would you rather be "Batman" or "The Joker"?

Name two things you like least about school.

Would you rather be known as friendly or good looking?



# GETTING TO KNOW YOU!



What career or job are you interested in after you graduate high school?

If you could invent something, what would it be?

Would you rather be good in sports or art?

What word best describes you?

Would you rather be smart or popular?

What is your favorite color?

Would you rather be thought of as tough or kind?

If you could be any age right now, what would it be?

What is your favorite time of day?

What talent do you wish you had?

What is your favorite kind of weather?

What is your favorite holiday?

What is your favorite website?

What would you like to learn more about?

What famous person or celebrity would you like to be friends with?

If you had \$5000 to give to a charity, what charity would you give to?

What is your favorite radio station?

Who is your role model (who do you look up to)?

What is your favorite kind of pizza?

What is your favorite movie ever?

Who/what is your favorite cartoon character?

What school event do you wish your school would have?

# RECIPROCITY MAY BE GOLDEN



<b>LESSON NAME:</b>	<b>RECIPROCITY MAY BE GOLDEN</b>
<b>Grade Level:</b>	Middle School
<b>Background:</b>	<p>In 1963, President John F. Kennedy called for Congress to enact comprehensive legislation to protect the civil rights of African Americans, including the right to enter institutions of higher education. In his famous speech, often referred to as "The Civil Rights Speech," he appealed to a principle of ethics that expresses the idea that we should treat others in the way we would like to be treated. Adolescents are forming their own codes of ethics and notions of right and wrong. This is an ideal age to help high school students step out of their own experiences and appeal to their broader sense of altruism and desire to help others. A major point to emphasize in this lesson is that reciprocity forms a foundation for treating others well, even those with whom we disagree or even dislike. It is appropriate to reinforce for students that, while they don't have to like or care for everyone, it is expected that they will treat everyone with dignity and respect. These are important principles of bullying prevention and will help to contribute to a more positive school climate.</p>
<b>Goals:</b>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• define reciprocity.</li><li>• describe ways that reciprocity forms a foundation for treating others well.</li><li>• express ways to treat others fairly, even those we dislike or with whom we disagree.</li><li>• identify ways that the principle of reciprocity can be applied to improve relationships in their family, school, community, and society.</li><li>• identify and compare various principles of reciprocity and ethical codes about how others should be treated.</li></ul>
<b>Materials:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Codes of Reciprocity</li><li>• Copy of the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights for reference</li><li>• Audio MP3 file (13 minutes) of Civil Rights Address by John F. Kennedy</li><li>• Computer and sound projection equipment</li><li>• Copy of President Kennedy's speech for each group of two to three students. A direct link to the audio and four-page PDF transcript is found on <a href="http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/jfkcivilrights.htm">www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/jfkcivilrights.htm</a></li></ul>

# RECIPROCITY MAY BE GOLDEN



## LESSON PROCEDURE:

### Set Up:

Select statements from Codes of Reciprocity that you think would be most interesting or meaningful for you students. Listen to and download the MP3 of President Kennedy's speech for replay in class.

### Introduction: (5-10 minutes)

Read one or two examples you selected from Codes of Reciprocity. **"In everyday modern language, what do these statements mean? What do they suggest about how we should treat others?"**

**What does 'reciprocity' mean?** ( A relationship between people involving a mutual change of goods, services, favors, or obligations.)

**How does reciprocity relate to the statements I just read?**

If students raise the idea that the statements or codes are often called the 'Golden Rule,' ask:

**Why do you think it is referred to that way? What might make it a 'gold standard'?**

**Do you think this means everyone should be treated the same way, regardless of their circumstances? Why or why not?**

**What does this kind of code imply about how we treat others even if we don't like or agree with them?** (We should treat others with dignity, respect, fairness, etc.)

**Do you think it's easy or difficult to follow this principle? What factors might make it difficult to treat others fairly or kindly?"**

### Activity: (25 minutes)

1. Tell the class that you are going to play a 13-minute speech by the thirty-fifth president of the United States, John F. Kennedy. Briefly set the stage by explaining the events of the time.

# RECIPROCITY MAY BE GOLDEN



- "Alabama Governor George Wallace had blocked two African American students--Vivian Malone and James A. Hood-- from entering the University of Alabama because of their race.
  - On June 11, 1963, President Kennedy federalized Alabama National Guard troops to force the school to admit the students to class.
  - President Kennedy speaks to a divided nation about the incident and asks Americans to end racial discrimination.
  - In this speech you are about to hear, he lays out his argument in the form of expectations about how he wants citizens to treat their fellow Americans, regardless of their color."
2. Direct students to work in groups of two or three. Give each group a transcript of the speech. Play the speech all the way through without stopping. As the speech is played, as students to circle passages in the transcript where President Kennedy refers to the principles of reciprocity--treating others as we would want to be treated.

## **Discussion:** (15 minutes)

1. After you have listened to the speech, ask volunteers to share references to reciprocity and having a strong moral code about the treatment of others. The following are excerpt from the speech. References to reciprocity are in **bold**. Discuss these references with students and what they think the references mean.

"In short, every American ought to have the right to be treated as he would to be treated, as one would wish his children to be treated. . . .

**"This is not a sectional issue. Difficulties over segregation and discrimination exist in every city, in every State of the Union, producing in many cities a rising tide of discontent that threatens the public safety. Nor is this a partisan issue. In a time of domestic crisis men of goodwill and generosity should be able to unite regardless of party or politics. This is not even a legal or legislative issue alone. It is better to settle these matters in the courts than on the streets, and new laws are needed at every level, but law alone cannot make men see right. We are confronted primarily with a moral issue. It is as old as the Scriptures and is as clear as the American Constitution."**

"The heart of the question is whether all Americans are to be afforded **equal rights and equal opportunities, whether we are going to treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated.** If an American, because his skin is dark, cannot eat lunch in a restaurant open to the public, if he

# RECIPROCITY MAY BE GOLDEN



cannot send his children to the best public school available, if he cannot vote for the public officials who will represent him, if, in short, he cannot enjoy the full and free life which all of us want, then who among us would be content to have the color of his skin changed and stand in his place? Who among us would then be content with the counsels of patience and delay? . . .

"Therefore, I'm asking for your help in making it easier for us to move ahead and to provide the kind of **equality of treatment which we would want for ourselves; to give a chance for every child to be educated to the limit of his talents.**"

**2. How might President Kennedy's words about racism apply to our everyday lives here at school?**

**3. Is treating everyone fairly the same as treating them equally? Explain why or why not.** (Treating everyone the same doesn't always address their individual needs. For example, is it "fair" for students with a learning disability to have to complete a timed test in the same amount of time non-disabled students are given? Having the same amount of time to accomplish the task is "equal treatment"-- but giving some extra time to students with disabilities so they can be successful is "fair.")

**4. How do our relationships with people affect the way we might view their needs? How do our relationships affect our determination to stand up for them and help them?**

**5. What are examples of reciprocity we can all use throughout the school day, during class, at lunch, at school-related events, etc? What kinds of rules or principles do we already have in place from which we can draw?** Ask students to suggest a few scenarios where applying principles of reciprocity toward others could help improve relationships between individuals or groups in their school and in their community.

**6. How can you stand up for your rights but still show kindness or compassion to others whom you might dislike, or who might not be kind to you?**

## **Wrap Up:**

"We constantly have to make decisions about how we treat others throughout each day. When you think about how you want to be treated, it can help you understand how your actions affect



# RECIPROCITY MAY BE GOLDEN



affect others. If you don't want to be hurt, don't hurt others. If you want to be treated with respect, then treat others with respect.

Even when you don't like someone, it benefits everyone, including you, to find ways to treat that person with kindness and respect--as you would like to be treated."

# THE RIGHT STUFF



<b>LESSON NAME:</b>	<b>THE RIGHT STUFF</b>
<b>Grade Level:</b>	Middle School
<b>Background:</b>	<p>Preventing and addressing bullying has long been considered an issue of basic human rights. Children and youth have a right to be treated with dignity and respect and to be educated in an environment free of bullying and harassment. With these rights come corresponding responsibilities of members of a school community to protect students' rights. As stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, governments must "take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social, and educational means to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation . . . while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any person who has the care of the child" (emphasis added).</p> <p>In this lesson, students will explore the idea of bullying as an issue of human rights, and they will examine the responsibilities that students and adults have to protect students from the oppression and humiliation of bullying.</p>
<b>Goals:</b>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• define rights.</li><li>• discuss how rights and responsibilities are intertwined.</li><li>• identify responsibilities of all members of the school community in protecting students' rights to be free from bullying.</li></ul>
<b>Materials:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "The Right Stuff" Quotations, one copy (or more if you have a large class)</li><li>• "The Right Stuff" Questions, one per small group</li><li>• Blank paper, one piece per small group</li><li>• Pencils</li></ul>

## LESSON PROCEDURE:

### Set Up:

Write the following quote from the U.S. Surgeon General on the board or on chart paper:

"The American ideal is not that we all agree with each other, or even like each other, every minute

# THE RIGHT STUFF



of the day. It is rather that we will respect each other's rights, especially the right to be different, and that, at the end of the day, we will understand that we are one people, one country, and one community, and that our well-being is inextricably bound up with the well-being of each and every one of our fellow citizens."

-C. Everett Koop, U.S. Surgeon General, 1982-1989

Print one or more copies of "The Right Stuff" Quotations so that you have one quote for each small group. Choose different quotes for each group or the same quote in order to compare and contrast answers. Print "The Right Stuff" Questions, one copy for each small group.

## **Introduction:** (15 minutes)

**Today, we're going to discuss rights and responsibilities, and how each relates to bullying behavior.**

**In your own words, what does the term "rights" mean to you?** After students share their ideas, provide one or both of the following definitions and ask students to interpret them. **What do these definitions mean to you? How do they apply to your own life?**

- "Something that is due to a person or governmental body by law, tradition, or nature."  
(thefreedictionary.com)
- "Something to which one has a just claim. The power or privilege to which one is justly entitled."  
(Merriam-Webster.com/dictionary)

**There are different kinds of rights, including civil rights (those rights belonging to all citizens, such as the right to vote, the right to equal protection under the law) and human rights (rights or freedoms to which all human beings are entitled).**

Refer to the board and have students read the quote by the former U.S. Surgeon General. **How do you think what Dr. Koop said applies to our school community? How does it apply to the issue of bullying at our school?**

**How could bullying in our school still have an impact on you even if you're not directly involved or perhaps don't even know about it?** (Bullying can make the atmosphere at school negative; it can be uncomfortable to be somewhere where people aren't protected or safe; if students "get away" with bullying, they may bully others, like me.)

# THE RIGHT STUFF



Project or write the following two phrases on the board one at a time. For each, have the class brainstorm ideas.

- Students who are bullied have the right to: \_\_\_\_\_

(Encourage students to think of a wide variety of answers, such as: have a friend, have companionship at school, have an adult who cares about them, have others stand up for them, be treated with respect, be left alone, be at school just like everyone else, learn in a safe environment, feel free to be themselves without being judged or criticized.)

- ALL students in a school have a right to [or to be treated with]: \_\_\_\_\_

(Friendship, dignity, respect, equality, etc.) Encourage students to compare and contrast their answers or to reflect on why they might think those lists should be the same or different.

## **Activity:** (15 minutes)

1. Divide the class into groups of five to six students. Tell each group to choose a leader and a recorder. Give each group a quote and one "The Right Stuff" Questions handout.
2. **Group leaders, read the quote to your group and then read each of the questions on you handouts. Discuss the answers to the questions as a group. Recorders, please write down your group's answers. Allow 10 minutes for the small-group work.**
3. After the small groups have completed their work, return to the circle for discussion.

## **Discussion:** (15 minutes)

1. Have each group read their quote aloud and share their thoughts about its meaning and their agreement/disagreement with the first two questions on the handout.
2. After each group has shared, ask each, in turn, to share their discussion of questions 3 and 4 on the handout. What responsibilities are involved in protecting students' rights to be safe from violence and bullying at school? What individuals at a school have these responsibilities? (Administrators, teachers, other staff, students, parents.)
3. Guide the discussion toward the realization that we all have responsibilities to maintain the rights of others.

## **Wrap Up:**

# THE RIGHT STUFF



"All students have the right to attend school without fear of being teased, tormented, harassed, or excluded. Having rights also means that all members of our school community have responsibilities to help protect these rights for everyone."

## CURRICULUM CONNECTION:

**History/Civics:** Have students research historical examples of conflicts or rights between people. Create a class presentation that explores the collision of rights of different groups, and how the conflict has been resolved (or is still being debated). Examples: prohibition, women's suffrage, abolition of slavery, desegregation, anti-discrimination in the workplace, disabilities rights legislation.

**Civics:** Have students research the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child ([www.unicef.org/crc](http://www.unicef.org/crc)) and do a class presentation about the different rights outlined in this treaty. Have them present an argument for or against ratification of the Convention by the United States.

**English:** Ask students to choose a group that promotes the rights of particular people or animals and give a persuasive speech (based on research about the group) about the importance and value of the group. Examples: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); Anti-Defamation League (ADL); Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International; Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN); Autism National Committee.

**Art:** Suggest that students make a poster about the rights group they researched (see English Connection above).

**World Civilizations/Current Events:** Ask the students to create their own Human Rights Watch Project by reporting on human rights abuses in countries around the world based on newspaper, journal, and media reports.

**Extracurricular Activities:** Encourage students to investigate the possibility of launching a project, club, or fundraising activity associated with the rights group they researched. As part of this effort, students could develop a proposal and seek approval from the school administration.



# THE RIGHT STUFF



## THE RIGHT STUFF: QUOTATIONS

**Instructions:** Print this document and cut apart the quotations. You will need one quotation for each small group.



"Rights! There are no rights whatever without corresponding duties."

--Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834)  
English poet, philosopher, and literary critic

"I believe that every right implies a responsibility."

--John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (1874-1960)  
major philanthropist

"With every civil right there has to be a corresponding civil obligation."

--Edison Haines, civil rights activist

"We need to restore the full meaning of that old word, duty. It is the other side of rights."

--Pearl S. Buck (1892-1973)  
American writer, awarded the Pulitzer Prize  
and the first American woman to be awarded  
the Nobel Prize in Literature

"No man was ever endowed with a right without being at the same time saddled with a responsibility."

--Gerald W. Johnson (1890-1980)  
journalist, essayist, historian, novelist

# THE RIGHT STUFF



## THE RIGHT STUFF: QUESTIONS

1. What do you think your group's quote means?

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2. Do you agree with the quote? Why or why not?

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3. What responsibilities are involved in protecting students' rights to be safe from bullying at school?

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4. Who has these responsibilities?

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# X'D OUT OR X'D IN?



<b>LESSON NAME:</b>	<b>X'D OUT OR X'D IN? (LGBTQ+ INCLUSION)</b>
<b>Grade Level:</b>	Middle School
<b>Background:</b>	One of the difficulties in addressing LGBTQ+ bias in school has been a lack of ordinary conversation about LGBTQ+ people and themes from which to draw. Prior to 1997, with Ellen DeGeneres's famous coming out on television, there were very few out celebrities or out characters in pop culture. In recent years, this landscape has changed somewhat, and as gay rights issues also appear in the news (Don't Ask Don't Tell, gay marriage, anti-bullying legislation in schools), there is a larger national discourse around LGBTQ+ issues. And yet, in terms of the stories we hear about partnering, LGBTQ+ students have fewer models than their heterosexual counterparts. This session uses that disparity to explore the larger question of what it means for a cultural group to feel excluded.
<b>Goals:</b>	Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• define exclusion as it pertains to cultural representation in the media and literature.</li><li>• recognize the ways in which certain groups, LGBT people in particular, are often excluded or not fully included in routine communication.</li><li>• articulate the ways in which exclusion is potentially harmful to a group of people.</li></ul>
<b>Materials:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Blank sheets of paper</li><li>• Pencils</li></ul>

## LESSON PROCEDURE:

### Set Up:

On the board, write the following four categories:

1. Fairy tales/folk tales/children's stories
2. In the media/popular culture
3. Characters on TV shows you currently watch
4. Literature you have read or are familiar with (for school or otherwise)

# X'D OUT OR X'D IN?



## **Introduction & Activity:** (15 minutes)

(Note: If possible, for honest responses, this activity should not be the initial discussion of LGBTQ+ issues.)

1. Divide students into groups of four or five. Give each group a sheet of paper. List as many famous romantic couples as you can think of in each of the following categories:
  - Fairy tales/ folk tales/children's stories
  - In the media/popular culture
  - Characters on TV shows you currently watch
  - Literature you have read or are familiar with (for school or otherwise)
2. You may wish to give examples such as Romeo and Juliet, Beauty and the Beast, Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie. Note, however, that you are looking for romantic couples and not famous pairs - Batman and Robin or Hansel and Gretel, for example.
3. Give students 5 to 7 minutes to generate their lists.
4. When all groups are finished, give the next step. **"Now, tally the number of your answers that are"**
  - **Male-female couples**
  - **Male-male couples**
  - **Female-female couples"**
5. As class size allows, ask some or all of the groups to share their tallies.
6. The groups are likely to come up with many more straight couples than gay couples. Give students just 2 to 3 minutes to see if they can generate a list of gay couples.

## **Discussion:** (20 minutes)

1. **Did your lists tend to gravitate toward straight couples?** Why or why not, do you think? Was it more difficult to generate a list of gay couples?
2. **What does it mean to be inclusive?** What does it mean to be exclusive? We can define exclusion as a "lack of representation of a specific group or category of people, whether deliberate or not."
3. Of the categories listed on the board, would we consider any to be inclusive of LGBTQ+ themes (not just romantic couples, but any LGBT characters/performers)? How so?
4. According to 2010 U.S. Census data, there are over nine hundred thousand same-sex couples in the United States. **Do you think that books, films, TV, and other media are accurately inclusive**

# X'D OUT OR X'D IN?



**of the LGBTQ+ population?** ( Note: No census data are available for single LGBTQ+ Americans; sexual orientation and gender identity are not questions on the survey.)

**5. How many of you read or were told stories that included LGBTQ+ characters when you were little?** When was the first time such characters began to appear in your experience? In what ways do you think this shaped your attitudes toward LGBTQ+ people or LGBTQ+ relationships?

**6. What do you think are the effects on someone who does not see themselves represented accurately in the media?** What might that feel like?

**7. What other groups might be underrepresented in our culture--media, mythology, etc.?** (Try to push answers beyond just race, religion, and sexual orientation. Some examples that may not immediately come to mind include transgender people, individuals living in extreme poverty, people with disabilities, or the mentally ill.)

**8. Does anyone here have an aspect of their own life, or of someone they know, that isn't represented or talked about publicly?** (Experiences might include religion, ethnic/cultural heritage, race, family structure, hobbies/interests. Students may not feel comfortable sharing, and they should not be pushed to do so if that is the case.)

**9.** According to the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, between 10 percent and 33 percent of prime time programming on the five major TV networks (ABC, NBC, CBS, Fox, The CW) is inclusive of LGBTQ+ themes. Do you think that's accurate?

**10. Do you think the networks should be asked to change their programming to deliberately include underrepresented groups?** (This could include the LGBT population, but other examples are Muslim Americans or African Americans.)

**11. Do you think the lists you created would have looked different when your parents were in high school in terms of the numbers of gay couples represented?** Do you think such lists will look different when your children are in high school?

## Wrap Up:

"There are many different ways in which we develop our own identities and become aware of those who are different from us. This week as you watch television, and read books and magazines (and perhaps even children's stories if you babysit or have younger siblings), continue to take stock of the groups of people you are seeing, and also the groups you aren't seeing. We often don't pay nearly as much attention to this type of information (especially the things we aren't seeing). I'd like to hear what you notice when we meet again next time."



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**If I know someone is being  
bullied, I will tell an adult  
at home and at school .**

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# PUSHING THE LEGAL LIMITS



<b>LESSON NAME:</b>	<b>PUSHING THE LEGAL LIMITS</b>
<b>Grade Level:</b>	Middle School
<b>Background:</b>	<p>Bullying may negatively affect the physical, psychological, and academic well-being of youth who are bullied, and it may contribute to an unhealthy social and learning environment for all students and adults at school. But bullying behaviors may also have serious legal consequences for youth who bully, their parents, and/or adults at school who do not address it. In this class meeting, students will explore instances where behaviors may cross legal lines and violate civil or criminal laws. The seriousness of these behaviors is important for all students to understand--whether they engage in these behaviors, experience them, or witness them.</p> <p>This lesson requires more than one session to cover all the concepts and to allow for thorough student discussion. It is recommended that you conduct the first activity before moving forward with discussion of the case studies.</p>
<b>Goals:</b>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• define the legal terms civil, libel, slander, assault, stalking, possession and dissemination of child pornography, harassment.</li><li>• identify bullying behaviors or situations that may violate civil or criminal laws.</li></ul>
<b>Materials:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pushing the Legal Limits: Terminology, one copy per student</li><li>• Sample Cases for Pushing the Legal Limits</li><li>• Pencils</li></ul>

## LESSON PROCEDURE:

### Set Up:

If possible, schedule two class meetings about these topics in close succession to cover the key concepts and allow use of all the materials provided. Write the legal terms on the board.

Activity 1: Print Pushing the Legal Limits: Terminology. Each student will need a copy.

Activity 2: Prioritize the legal concepts you wish to stress with your students and then select the cases that highlight those points for class discussion.

# PUSHING THE LEGAL LIMITS



**Introduction:** (10 minutes)

**"What do you think the following examples have in common?"**

- A student creates a website that says the school principal is a drunk and is romantically involved with the school secretary.
- A fifteen-year-old boy sends a nude picture of himself to a thirteen-year-old girl through his cell phone.
- A boy makes threatening and violent Youtube videos.

**All these examples are real incidents. In each situation, the teen who was involved was charged with a crime. Charges filed by law enforcement authorities can result in legal consequences for the teens and/or their parents.**

- Teens do many things online or in person that can be considered a violation of laws, even if the teen is under the age of eighteen.
- Sometimes teens can be charged as adults, depending on their age and the severity of their actions.
- In other cases, school officials can be charged for failing to stop harassment and protect students' rights.

**We'll be discussing more cases like these. But first of all, let's look at some of the legal terms and concepts involved. The exact legal definitions may vary from state to state. What we want to do is to understand the concept."**

Review the following definitions with the students:

**Libel** and **Slander** are both crimes of defamation--spreading false information about a person. Libel occurs when written or printed words or images harm a person's reputation, cause people to think less of the person, or cause people to say negative things or have negative or hostile feelings toward the person. Slander has the same effects as libel but through the spoken word.

**Assault** or **assault and battery** involves a threat, intent to harm, and body contact. It makes someone afraid that they are in imminent danger of being physically harmed. They feel convinced that the assailant has the ability to carry out threats to hurt them through harmful or offensive touching.

**Possession** or **dissemination of child pornography** is a crime that involves possessing or sharing images of minors (typically under the age of eighteen) engaged in sexual activity or

# PUSHING THE LEGAL LIMITS



pictures of minors engaging in in lewd or erotic behavior designed to arouse the viewer's sexual interest. This could include materials voluntarily shared with a boyfriend or girlfriend if either person is under the age of eighteen. Laws may vary from state to state.

**Sexual harassment** refers to a variety of unwanted sexual advances (including touching, feeling, groping), requests for sexual favors, and degrading and/or sexist comments in school or in the workplace. There is an implied or stated suggestion that the person being harassed must submit to this treatment or suffer consequences. Sexual harassment creates a hostile environment and refers to anti-gay comments as well as comments regarding heterosexual behavior.

**Racial harassment** is unwanted behavior, speech, written word, or pictures directed at someone because of their race, color, or nationality.

**Disability harassment** is a form of discrimination that involves the physical mistreatment or verbal abuse of people with disabilities.

## **Activity 1:** (15 minutes)

1. Divide students into small groups. Give each student a copy of Pushing the Legal Limits: Terminology. Assign each group one or two terms. Have the groups read the definition for each term and discuss answers to the question.
2. When time is up, bring students back together in a circle to continue the discussion.

## **Discussion: Activity 1** (20 minutes)

1. Have each group present its terminology and discuss the answers members gave to the questions.
2. Encourage all students to share opinions and examples, ask questions, and discuss the information raised in small groups.

## **Activity 2:** (25 minutes)

# PUSHING THE LEGAL LIMITS



1. **"We've looked at some legal terms and their possible implications for teens and adults at school. Now, let's look at some sample legal cases in which teens were charged for various crimes or in which school officials were charged with violating federal civil rights laws."**
2. Read each legal case you have selected from pages 83-86. Using the suggested questions, discuss why the teen's action was considered illegal or the school officials' behavior violated civil rights law. Remind students of the laws from activity 1 that pertain to the case.

## **Discussion: Activity 2** (15 minutes)

1. Why do you think it is important for teens to understand the implications of these behaviors?
2. What might be unintended or unexpected results of some casual words or actions?
3. What might be some of the long-term effects of being accused of any of these crimes?
4. What may be some of the long-term effects of being charged with these crimes on the offender? On their family?
5. Are there compelling reasons not to do these things even if they aren't illegal?
6. Now that you have heard about these cases, what thoughts do you have? What do you wish you could have said to the teens or adults who were involved?
7. Why do you think the teens in these cases made the choices they did? What, if anything, do you think might have changed their choices? (Information, rules, friend, adult, etc.) Do you think there are ways to help teens make better choices?
8. What choices could you make if you knew a friend was engaged in any of these behaviors? What could you do or say? To whom could you turn for advice or support?

## **Wrap Up:**

"Part of being a normal teen is taking chances, trying new things, and testing limits. Unfortunately, as we saw today, some choices can have potentially devastating effects. When teens engage in behavior that is harmful to others, they take the risk that their actions could actually be illegal even if they are under the age of eighteen.

If you see or are asked to participate in these behaviors, think about what you can do as a bystander to intervene and protect the person being harmed or to stop friends from engaging in legal or illegal risky behavior."

# PUSHING THE LEGAL LIMITS



## CURRICULUM CONNECTION:

**History/Civics:** Students can research the history behind the laws and criminal definitions used in this lesson and share their findings with the class. Invite a speaker from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention or a local juvenile probation or parole officer to talk about the justice system for teens.

**Civics/Current Events:** Ask students to read and discuss the October 26, 2010, "Dear Colleague Letter" from the assistant secretary for civil rights, U.S. Department of Education, and prepare a presentation on one type of harassment.

[www.stopbullying.gov/references/white\\_house\\_conference/white\\_house\\_conference\\_materials.pdf](http://www.stopbullying.gov/references/white_house_conference/white_house_conference_materials.pdf)

**Math/Statistics:** Students could research the number of convictions and/or lawsuits in your community for the crimes mentioned in this meeting. What percent were committed by people age twenty-four and under?

## SAMPLE CASES:

### Case 1:

In Pennsylvania, three girls, aged fourteen and fifteen, were charged with manufacturing, disseminating, or possessing child pornography after taking nude or semi-nude photos of themselves and sending the photos to three boys through their cell phones. The boys, aged sixteen and seventeen, were charged with possession of child pornography. The photos were discovered when school officials took the cellphone of one of the boys who was breaking school rules about cell phone use in class.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Why was the boys' behavior illegal? How about the girls' behavior?
2. Were you surprised that teens can be charged with crime for taking nude pictures of themselves?



# PUSHING THE LEGAL LIMITS



3. What should you do if you receive a nude or semi-nude photo (sext) of someone? (Delete it immediately, and report it to an adult.)
4. Usually in cases of electronic or cyber bullying, we encourage students to save the evidence and show it to an adult. Why do you think it is important for teens to delete nude photos instead of saving them? (In some areas, teens or adults may be charged with possession-- even if their intent was good.)

## **Case 2:**

A sixteen-year-old boy was arrested for criminal libel in Utah after creating a website that made statements about his high school principal and two teachers. The statements included accusations about drinking, drug use, and sexual behavior.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Why was the boy's behavior illegal?
2. What might have motivated him to create the website? Would most teens think about possible legal consequences of online behavior? Why or why not?

## **Case 3:**

At a high school in a midwestern city, a number of students placed offensive handwritten but anonymous notes into the lockers and notebooks of African American students. In the cafeteria, the same students used racial slurs and threatened African American students who tried to sit at a nearby table. Six African American students came forward to tell school officials that they did not feel safe at school. School personnel investigated and gave detention to three student perpetrators who could be identified. However, racial tensions escalated to the point that fights broke out between the school's racial groups. School officials were found to have violated students' federal civil rights under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Put yourself in the place of one of the targeted African American students. How might the behaviors of the other students interfere with your ability to fully participate at school? (Might



# PUSHING THE LEGAL LIMITS



1. feel anxious and unable to concentrate in class; might feel uncomfortable participating in extracurricular activities; might fear being assaulted in halls, on school buses, etc.)
2. If you were a witness to this kind of behavior, how might this have affected you? Why were these students' civil rights violated? (The school officials didn't recognize or acknowledge the pattern of harassment, which included overly racist behavior [racial slurs] and targeting students on the basis of their race.)
3. The school personnel did discipline some of the students involved. Were you surprised that they still could be successfully sued for violation of civil rights? What do you think school personnel should have done to better respond to these behaviors?

## **Case 4:**

In Massachusetts, six teenagers (aged sixteen to eighteen) were charged with crimes after taunting and physically threatening a fifteen-year-old girl at school and on the Internet. Charges included harassment, stalking, and civil rights violations resulting in bodily harm.

## **Discussion Questions:**

1. This was a real case--the students' behaviors took place over the course of several months in 2009 and 2010. Does anyone remember the particulars of this case? (Phoebe Prince immigrated to the United States from Ireland in 2009. After being repeatedly bullied by classmates at her high school, she died by suicide in January 2010. The case received international attention and fueled state legislators to pass stricter anti-bullying legislation.)
2. How could these behaviors constitute harassment? Stalking? A violation of civil rights?

## **Case 5:**

In California, several high school students repeatedly called a student with a learning disability "idiot" and "retarded" at school on the school bus. On one occasion they pushed him to the ground, hit him with a school binder, and threw his lunch in the garbage. The student told his teachers and counselor that he was being bullied. The principal offered the student counseling services, but did not discipline the students who harassed him. The student, who had been performing well academically, became frustrated and depressed, and often skipped school to avoid being targeted by the students. School officials were found to have violated the student's federal civil

# PUSHING THE LEGAL LIMITS



rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

## Discussion Questions:

1. How could these behaviors qualify as disability harassment? (The school's administrators failed to recognize the offending students' behavior as disability harassment. The harassment included behavior that was based on the student's disability, and it limited his ability to fully benefit from the school's educational program.)
2. In what way might the other students' behavior have limited his ability to fully benefit from the school's educational program?
3. What do you think motivated students to treat him this way?
4. In your opinion, how should the school officials have responded?

## Notes:

\*\*Facts from **case 1** based on a real case: [www.msnbc.msn.com/id28679588/technology\\_and\\_science-tech\\_and\\_gadgets/t/sexting-surprise-teens-face-child-porn-charges](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id28679588/technology_and_science-tech_and_gadgets/t/sexting-surprise-teens-face-child-porn-charges).

\*\*Facts from **case 2** based on a real case: Teen Cyberbullying Investigated by Thomas A. Jacobs (Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, 2010), p.71.

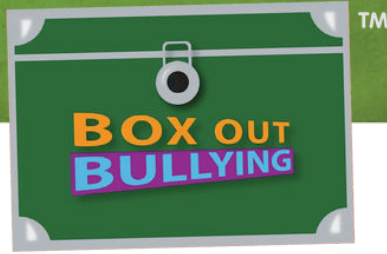
\*\***Case 3**, a fictional case, based on a scenario provided in the October 26, 2010, "Dear Colleague Letter" by Russlynn Ali, assistant secretary for civil rights.

[www.stopbullying.gov/references/white\\_house\\_conference/white\\_house\\_conference\\_materials.pdf](http://www.stopbullying.gov/references/white_house_conference/white_house_conference_materials.pdf)

\*\*Facts for **case 4** based on a real case: E. Eckholm and K. Zezima. "6 teenagers are charged after classmate's suicide." New York times, March 20, 2010.

\*\***Case 5**, a fictional case, based on a scenario provided in the October 26, 2010, "Dear Colleague Letter" by Russlynn Ali, assistant secretary for civil rights.

[www.stopbullying.gov/references/white\\_house\\_conference/white\\_house\\_conference\\_materials.pdf](http://www.stopbullying.gov/references/white_house_conference/white_house_conference_materials.pdf)



**SEL**

**Social-Emotional  
Learning**

# COPING WITH SELF-DEFEATING BEHAVIOR



<b>LESSON NAME:</b>	<b>COPING WITH SELF-DEFEATING BEHAVIOR</b>
<b>Grade Level:</b>	Middle School
<b>Background:</b>	<p>What is self-defeating behavior?</p> <p>Psychologists have defined "self-defeating behavior" as any behavior that blocks an individual's goals and wishes. The following personality characteristics represent some self-defeating attitudes and behaviors that will keep you from succeeding in school and your career when you become an adult.</p>
<b>Goals:</b>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• determine goals over which they have control.</li><li>• brainstorm how to eliminate self-defeating behaviors and work toward achieving their goals.</li></ul>
<b>Materials:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coping with Self-Defeating Behavior Goal Setting Worksheet</li></ul>

## LESSON PROCEDURE:

### Introduction:

Lead a discussion with your students surrounding some of the common self-defeating behaviors and ways to counteract them as listed below:

**Lack of motivation:** Part of being successful in school or work is the desire to do well. It must be something that you WANT.

**Lack of persistence:** Everyone becomes discouraged or frustrated at times with school. The successful students will continue and not give up.

**Little accomplishment:** If you are working hard, but have little to show for it, you may need help in

# COPING WITH SELF-DEFEATING BEHAVIOR



how to use your time more effectively. The quality of your effort is more important than just putting in time. Learn how to focus your energy on each of your assignments in school.

**Inability to complete tasks and. to follow-through:** Some students are very good at their homework or projects, but seem unable to complete them. In school and life, be rewarded for the work you promise to complete and then do it. Would you pay a mechanic who only completed half the repairs on your car?

**Inability to get started:** This is partly related to motivation or wanting to do your work but it also includes being able to do something that's in your best interest even though you would rather be doing something else (e.g., watching TV, being with your friends, etc.). You can help yourself by looking into the future and seeing the payoff (e.g., better grades, learning something new) you will receive by taking the time now to study, complete your homework, etc.

**Fear of failure:** There are two kinds of students — those who are afraid to make mistakes because they think they will look stupid to others, and those who are not afraid to make mistakes because they realize it is the only way to really learn. All successful people have made mistakes or failed at something. They became successful because they learned from their mistakes and did not give up.

**Procrastination:** Procrastination refers to putting off doing things that need to be done. Procrastination only leads to low grades, poor quality of work, increased stress, and disappointment with you.

**Looking for scapegoats:** The student who is "looking for scapegoats" is always looking to blame someone else for their poor performance in school. "It's not my fault; my teacher is boring." "I don't do my homework because my parents won't stop bugging me about it!" "It's not my fault I don't know about the test today. I was absent the day the teacher told the class about it." These students refuse to take responsibility for their own mistakes.

**Excessive self-pity:** We might call this the "poor me disease." Sometimes we all feel bad about one thing or another, but it's a problem when we think like this too much of the time. Students who spend most of their time on self-pity don't have the energy to use their time constructively and make changes. Over time, self-pity also tends to turn other people off.



# COPING WITH SELF-DEFEATING BEHAVIOR



**Distractibility and lack of concentration:** It is important to be able to focus your energy when listening and completing assignments. Some students have difficulty doing this without help. If this is a real problem for you, then it is important to talk to your teacher or advisor and ask for their help. Break your assignments into smaller activities if you can't concentrate for long periods of time. Try to figure out under what conditions you work best.

**Ineffective time management:** Successful students learn how to balance their school work and personal life. First you have to decide about the real priorities in your life (hopefully school will be high on that list). Then learn how to budget your time so that you can complete the priorities. You will not only feel good about yourself and be more successful in school, but you will find time to enjoy your life outside of school.

**Too little self-confidence:** The best way to build confidence is to first change the kind of self-defeating behavior described above. For example, when you are motivated, you refuse to give up.

## **Activity:**

Have your students complete the Coping with Self-Defeating Behavior Goal Setting Worksheet, which is on the following page.

## **Wrap Up:**

Review common self-defeating behaviors and emphasize that they can be overcome! Have your students share their goals and how they will work to achieve them.



# COPING WITH SELF-DEFEATING BEHAVIOR



## GOAL SETTING WORKSHEET

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Guidelines for Setting Goals:

1. Select a goal over which you have control.
2. Ask if the goal is too big or too easy.
3. Avoid using vague words, such as: some, more, often, better, etc. Use measurable terms
4. Be sure the goal is YOURS, and not someone else's.

**What will you do?** (My Goal)

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**Nine-Week Goal:** (Short-Term)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Semester Goal:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_

**What do you need to do differently to help you to obtain these goals?** What self-defeating behaviors (enemies) will you give up?

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**How will you measure your progress?** Be specific and detailed.

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**Who or what will verify that you have reached the goals?**

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I will \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_  
(State Goal) (Date)

# SELF-ESTEEM



<b>LESSON NAME:</b>	<b>SELF-ESTEEM / SELF-CONTROL</b>
<b>Grade Level:</b>	Middle School
<b>Background:</b>	<p>Using a real-life scenario, students will learn how to overcome anger accompanying failure and develop a plan of action to demonstrate competence.</p> <p>When students are able to overcome the negative attitudes underlying their feelings of failure, their emotional resilience dramatically increases, enabling them to better handle the pressures of growing up. Sometimes we allow negative messages from others to get us down and we tend to give up. This is self-defeating behavior. Practice using positive self messages to set goals for future success.</p>
<b>Goals:</b>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• implement skills necessary to exhibit and maintain a positive self-concept and effective self-control.</li><li>• understand how to develop feelings of competence in the face of failure.</li></ul>
<b>Materials:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pen/Paper</li><li>• Chalk/chalkboard</li><li>• Handout 1 Using "I" messages</li><li>• Handout 2 Using Positive Self-Talk</li></ul>

## LESSON PROCEDURE:

### Introduction & Activity:

Write the following options on the board:

1. Give up and drop out of school;
2. Talk to her mother using "I" messages.
3. Use positive self-talk to avoid using the Comparison between her and her brother personally and do her best in school;
4. Try harder to be like her brother.

Tell students to listen as you read aloud the following scenario:

# SELF-ESTEEM



**Linda's mother criticized her for not getting good grades like her brother John. Linda is angry with herself for not being smarter.** Which of the above four options would be best for Linda?

1. Divide the class into small groups of three to five students and ask them to select a reporter for each group.
2. Ask each group to decide which option would be best for Linda to choose and tell why.
3. Write the following questions on the board and have each group brainstorm answers:
  - What else might Linda be feeling besides anger?
  - What can Linda say to herself to feel better about herself?
4. Help Linda construct an "I" message to use with her Mother.
5. Using Handout 2, ask students to identify bad messages she could give herself and replace those with "positive" self messages.
6. Have each group discuss a personal situation in which they felt 'put down' and ask the group construct an "I" message or positive "self-talk" message to maintain a healthy self-esteem.

## **Discussion:**

1. What would you feel if this happened to you?
2. What would you do to overcome your negative feelings?
3. What are some "I" messages she could have used?
4. How can you respond to "positively" to criticism from others?
5. How should you respond to a comparison made between you and someone?
6. What are some positive messages (self-talk) you can use to motivate yourself?

## **Wrap Up:**

**Extension Activities:** Practice using positive messages to self to overcome failure. Stay future focused and set goals to overcome future failure.

## "I" MESSAGES

**"I" messages** allow you to express to someone your need for them to change their behavior, without blaming them or putting them down. "I" messages create a positive atmosphere for communication and problem solving.

There are four parts to an "I" message...

<b>I feel...</b>	State the feeling	<i>I feel betrayed...</i>
<b>When you...</b>	State the other person's behavior	<i>When you tell other people something I told you in confidence...</i>
<b>Because....</b>	State the effect on you	<i>Because it's humiliating and it makes me feel I can't trust you...</i>
<b>I need...</b>	State what you want to happen	<i>I need to know that when I tell you something personal and private, you won't tell a single person.</i>



**"I" messages don't always have to be about something negative. It's important to send positive "I" messages, too.**

"I'm really glad that you've been coming to the after-school study sessions. It makes me feel that you really care about your work. I'll be glad to help you in any way I can."



**Beware of put-downs disguised as "I" messages.**

"I can't believe you're such a slob! Everyday is miserable because of you. I want you out of my locker and out of my life!"

## REPLACING NEGATIVE SELF-TALK WITH THE "POSITIVE" MESSAGE

One of the most powerful influences on your attitude and personality is what you say to yourself. It is not what happens to you but how you respond internally to what happens to you that determines your thoughts, feelings, and your actions. By controlling your inner dialogue (what you say to yourself), or your **"self talk,"** you can begin to gain control over every part of your life.

We are constantly faced with challenges, difficulties, and problems in everyday life. This is unavoidable. Much of your ability to succeed comes from the way you deal with life. Below are some examples of how we undermine our own success, followed by a more positive way to handle each scenario.

**Expecting the worst:** "What if I don't pass the exam?" Expecting the worst does not encourage you to behave as though you can succeed. Expecting the worst only promotes stress. **Instead:** Ask questions that presuppose positive outcomes. "How can I make a favorable impression?" "How can I prepare for the exam?"

**Focusing only on problems:** This is known as complaining. We dwell on the problem, instead of solutions. **Instead:** Assume most problems have solutions, and ask "How do I want this situation to be different?" What can I do to improve the situation?

**Catastrophizing:** You define very bad thing that happens is a horrible disaster as though life is about to end forever. **Instead:** Be realistic when you summarize all possible outcomes and stop scaring yourself. Yes, bad things do happen, and many bad things are often inconveniences, mistakes, and foul-ups---not necessarily traumas, tragedies, or disasters.

**Stereotyping:** By putting others, and ourselves, into preconceived categories, we avoid thinking of people as unique individuals. This leads to strained relationships, and gives us an undeserved sense of superiority or inferiority. It also often deprives us of opportunities to know and understand the giftedness of those whom we stereotype. **Instead:** Remind yourself that we are all human beings, with unique personalities, each having qualities and shortcomings.

**Shoulds:** Should, ought, must, have to... used carelessly, these words may impose rules and standards for behavior that do not exist in reality. They imply an obligation to be or behave a certain way, often evoke guilt and may make you want to give up for not being 'good enough! For example "I should be smarter than I am." or "I ought to be a straight "A" student! **Instead:** Replace the words should, ought, or must with the word "COULD" and realize you have choices.



## REPLACING NEGATIVE SELF-TALK WITH THE "POSITIVE" MESSAGE

**Thinking in Absolutes:** We exaggerate reality with words like "always," "never," and "everyone," as in "I always eat too much-I will never be slim." **Instead:** Replace exaggeration with words that more accurately reflect reality. Example "I often eat more than I need, but I can change that"

**All or Nothing Thinking:** We distort reality by thinking only in extremes. Our efforts become total failures or complete successes---with nothing in between. Example: "Either I get an "A" on my next exam or I quit studying." **Instead:** Give yourself options or choices whenever possible. Example: "I want to have an "A" average on my next report card to... i want to do better than I did last time. Even a "C" average is a big improvement. I will keep trying harder instead of giving up M/hen things aren't perfect.

**Negative labels:** Negative labels are the tools we use to lower self-esteem in ourselves and others. Example: "I'm stupid," or "I'm When we say phrases like these often, they become a part of our identity and we can begin to dislike who we are. **Instead:** Remember, people are not their faults or shortcomings. You may engage in stupid behavior occasionally, but that doesn't make you a stupid person. Change your negative "I-am" statement into a statement about behaviors. Example: "I make unhealthy choices when it comes to food." It's -easier to change a behavior, than to change your identity.

**Blaming:** We blame others, instead of solving the problem. If we can blame others, then we can feel vindicated in a wrong-doing, and avoid responsibility. **Instead:** Focus on what YOU can do to promote a solution to the problem.

**"Yes but..." Arguments:** When someone offers a possible solution to our problems, we "yes but..." and list reasons why the proposed solution won't work. "Yes but..." says "I'm really not listening to you right now." **Instead:** Open up to new possibilities and consider alternatives. Really listen to advice and give it a fair hearing, before dismissing it so quickly. If you keep trying the same things, you will keep getting the same results.

**Overgeneralizing:** This is similar to stereotyping and thinking in absolutes. It means that a single instance or occurrence, and generalize it to numerous other situations. Example: "Joyce is a nice girl, and she doesn't want to date me. Therefore: No nice girl will ever want to date me!" When misused, this kind of generalizing can lead to illogical conclusions. **Instead:** Ask yourself whether there could be exceptions to your generalization. Does a single occurrence mean it will happen every time?



## REPLACING NEGATIVE SELF-TALK WITH THE "POSITIVE" MESSAGE

Now you know what negative self-talk sounds like. Negative self-talk is usually a mixture of half-truths, poor logic, and distortions of reality that perpetuates negative emotions, such as pessimism, guilt, fear, and anxiety. It often occurs when in times of emotional turmoil, or when we are going through stress or a personal transition.

When you catch your negative self-talk, take a deep breath, relax, and remove yourself from the situation. Get up and stretch, or take a walk, or get a drink of water, in order to interrupt your train of thought and get out of the negative rut. Write down some of your negative thoughts and then ask yourself "Are the things I'm saying true? Are there other possibilities and meanings that I could get from these circumstances?" Then replace your negative thoughts with realistic, positive thoughts---and write those down too. Soon you'll stop that self-talk in mid-sentence. If you have difficulty changing your self-talk, you may have clinical depression, and a psychotherapist could help you.

### **Affirmations:**

One way to reprogram your self-talk is by repeating positive affirmations until you begin to get a good sense of what positive thinking really sounds like. What we most often tell ourselves can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you want to explore the power of positive affirmations, follow these guidelines.

1. Personalize your affirmations with words like "me," and "my." You can't always control circumstances or other people, so make your affirmations about what you can control---yourself. Make your affirmations state your own goals, wants, and values---not someone else's.
2. Affirmations are best stated in the present tense, because, if affirmations are in future tense ("I will... 'Y) your subconscious mind feels no urgency to act NOW If you feel like a hypocrite stating affirmations in the present tense (as in "I am slender and healthy") then state your affirmations as a process (as in "Each day I am becoming more slender and healthier.")
3. Make your affirmations believable and realistic. Begin with small, obtainable goals, and work your way up to bigger accomplishments. "My self control is perfect." is probably more believable as "I have self-control most of the time."
4. State affirmations in the positive. To say "I won't have a bad report card," only focuses your attention on the behavior you want to avoid. Instead say "My report card will be good."
5. Make affirmations short and easy to remember.
6. Repeat your positive affirmations often and positive thinking will become routine.

As you improve your self-talk; commit to changing your actions to reach your goals. We must change our thinking as well as our behaviors.