



OVERVIEW

Students discuss and practice safe and realistic responses to name-calling and bullying by role-playing fictional scenarios. They use the “instant replay” technique, in which they rehearse and retry responses to name-calling, and receive support from their peers. Students are introduced to “SAFE,” a set of strategies for responding to bullying and taking care of their personal needs.



OBJECTIVES

To provide students with safe and realistic strategies for responding to name-calling and bullying.

To give students practice responding to name-calling in a structured and supportive environment.

To increase students’ awareness about ways they can address their social and emotional needs when they are targets of name-calling or bullying.



AGE/EXPERIENCE LEVEL

Grades 6-12.



THINGS TO PREP & TOOLS NEEDED

Chart paper/markers, pens, student handouts: Instant Replay and Staying SAFE.



TIME

45 minutes.

Note: This activity can be done with the whole class, but may be most effective in a safe and structured space with a small group of students. The lesson is especially useful for those who regularly experience name-calling or bullying, and student allies who will assume a supportive posture during the activity.

PART 1 – INTRODUCING THE ACTIVITY (15 MINUTES)

Invite students to consider the following storyline: A nice but somewhat helpless child is brutally taunted and bullied by the cruel kids at school, learns how to fight back, and then teaches the bullies a lesson they won’t soon forget. Ask students if that plot sounds familiar. Encourage them

to talk briefly about books, television shows, movies or even video games they have experienced with similar themes.

Note that such storylines are popular in mass media and are a common fantasy among those of us who have ever been picked on, but that's all it is—a fantasy. Emphasize that in real life, fighting back or getting revenge is not something that we are likely to do. Nor is it a course of action that brings an end to bullying or makes us feel better. Ask students to consider realistic and safe responses to name-calling and bullying. List their responses on a sheet of chart paper and discuss their ideas.

PART 2 – ROLE PLAYING RESPONSES TO NAME-CALLING (30 MINUTES)

Distribute a copy of Staying SAFE (attached) to each student or post a large copy of it at the front of the room. Review the information with students and discuss each strategy for avoiding and responding to name-calling and bullying.

Tell students that they will be participating in some role-plays in order to practice the SAFE techniques and other strategies they have identified for responding to name-calling and bullying. Emphasize that rehearsing ways to respond to bullying, and practicing the actual words we might use out loud, can help us to feel more confident and prepared when real-life situations arise. Explain the Instant Replay method to students. After acting out each scenario, the student being bullied can call out “instant replay” and try again until she or he comes to a response that feels comfortable and effective. Another student can call “instant replay” as well, and step in to try out a response that may be helpful.

The role-play activity can be carried out by dividing the class into groups of 4-6 students and providing each group with one or more scenarios to enact. If your students would benefit from more structure and support, however, solicit volunteers to role-play one scenario at a time for the whole class while you act as facilitator.

Distribute the handout, Instant Replay, or cut it into strips and provide “actors” with one or more scenarios to role-play. After each role-play, direct students to discuss one or more of the following questions:

- Why was the student targeted for teasing or bullying? What did the people who were bullying get out of it?



INSTANT REPLAY

- What do you think the person being bullied was thinking and feeling during the incident?
- Was the strategy used to respond in this situation effective? Why or why not? What other response(s) would have been useful?
- What role did the bystanders play? What could they have done to help?
- What can the student who was being bullied do later to get support and avoid future problems?

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIFFERENTIATION

For younger students or students that need extra support, you can make sure to split into smaller groups or have the students write out what they would do in the situation before having them role-play. For students that need more of a challenge, you can have them give each other feedback on how they could improve the SAFE strategy in the situation.

FOLLOW-UP/EXTENSIONS

Other Lessons to Explore

[Learning Empowerment and Self-Identification](#), Challenging Assumptions, Creating an Anti-Slur Policy, Blow the Whistle on Name-Calling.

TAGS

Name-Calling Week, identity, anti-bullying.





INSTANT REPLAY

HANDOUT

Staying Safe

Being on the receiving end of name-calling and bullying can be a scary experience, but there are things you can do to protect yourself and to stay safe. First, don't be hard on yourself—it is not your fault if you are being picked on, and it is natural to feel upset or frightened in response to bullying. So take a deep breath and read on to learn about strategies for staying SAFE.

SAFE means...

Stand Positive and Strong

Avoid The Situation

Find Support

Express Your Feelings

1. STAND POSITIVE AND STRONG

Try to appear confident, if you can, and to not show fear or anger. (Some students who bully like to see that they can upset you). Respond by using an "I Message" that strongly expresses how you feel and that you expect the negative behavior to stop immediately. In some situations, it may be useful to respond to the negative behavior by saying something clever or funny—but only if you feel this will silence the bully rather than make him or her angrier.

2. AVOID THE SITUATION

Don't fight back or respond to bad behavior with more bad behavior. Think of your safety first and do not allow your emotions to cause you to react with anger or violence. Try to ignore hurtful comments and walk away if possible. Avoid places and situations where you might not be safe, such as areas where there are not many students or teachers around. In addition, you can make sure you are not alone in the bathroom or locker room; sit near the front of the bus; sit with a group of friends at lunch; and take a different route to class or walk with a teacher or friends.

3. FIND SUPPORT

Find others who have had similar experiences and support each other. Find new hobbies that you enjoy and will help you feel good about yourself. Hang out with people who accept you for who you are and join group activities where you will meet new friends who might stick up for you if you are picked on.

4. EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS

Keep a diary, journal or notebook to write down how you feel each day. Don't be afraid to talk about your feelings with your friends, family, teachers, or counselors. Seeking help is NOT "tattling."



Remember that it's ok to feel angry, scared, nervous, embarrassed, frustrated or help-less. When you experience negative feelings, practice saying positive statements.

HANDOUT

Instant Replay

Try role-playing one or more of the scenarios below using the SAFE guidelines for responding to name-calling and bullying. Use the Instant Replay method when you role-play. After acting out each scenario, the student being bullied can call out "instant replay" and try again until she or he comes to a response that feels comfortable and effective. Another student can call "instant replay" as well, and step in to try out a response that may be helpful. Rehearsing ways to respond to bullying, and practicing the words you might use out loud, can help you to feel more confident and prepared when a real-life situation comes up. After each role-play, use some of the following questions to help you process the situation and the strategies practiced.

DISCUSSION

- Why was the student targeted for teasing or bullying? What did the bullies get out of it?
- What do you think the person being bullied was thinking and feeling during the incident?
- Was the strategy used to respond in this situation effective? Why or why not? What other response(s) would have been useful?
- What role did the bystanders play? What could they have done to help?
- What can the student who was being bullied do later to get support and avoid future problems?

SCENARIO #1

The girls at school have been keeping their distance from Grace. No one will sit next to her at lunch, they hold their noses when they pass by her in the hall, and whisper to each other in her presence. After weeks of this treatment, Grace finds out from another student that a small group of girls has been telling everyone that Grace only takes a bath once a week and that her family never washes their clothes. The next day in science lab, the students were conducting an experiment with a bad-smelling chemical. The student at the station across from Grace's commented loudly, "This must be Grace's shampoo." The other students in the area burst out laughing.

SCENARIO #2

Jack has stuttered for as long as he can remember. He gets especially stuck on certain sounds, such as words beginning with 'sh,' and stammers worse when he is nervous. Jack has always experienced teasing about his stutter, but seventh grade has been the worst. When auditions for the school play were announced, Jack made the brave decision to try out as way to overcome some of his anxiety



INSTANT REPLAY

about speaking in front of others. When Jack took his seat among the other would-be actors, one of them repeatedly mocked Jack, saying things like, “Bbbbbbbreak a lllleg.” A couple of students laughed, but others looked as though they were uncomfortable with the comments.

SCENARIO #3

Theresa has been a student in a special education class since third grade due to a learning disability that has made reading and writing especially difficult tasks for her. In the sixth grade, Theresa’s teacher began sending her to a regular education class for math, which is her strongest subject. Some of the students in math class refer to Theresa as “special ed” and taunt her when the teacher is not within earshot. On one particular day, when the teacher was called out of the classroom for a few minutes, one of the students asked mockingly if she was a “retard.”

SCENARIO #4

Simone has been the butt of cruel and endless fat jokes ever since she transferred to her new school. Gym is especially uncomfortable for Simone, who tries to get out of class and away from the taunts whenever she can find an excuse. Things got bad enough that Simone decided to start a diet and grew determined to lose the extra weight. In the cafeteria one day, some boys approached Simone’s table and peered at the salad she was eating. In front of Simone’s friends and the others at her table, one of the boys remarked sarcastically, “Looks like that salad’s really helping.” The other boys followed suit with more mean comments.

SCENARIO #5

Jose is the son of a lesbian couple who adopted him when he was two years old. Jose never felt that his family was different—his moms always seemed just like any other parents. Lately, though, some of the students at school have been making rude remarks about Jose’s moms. They also call Jose “fag” and other cruel names. One afternoon after basketball practice, a couple of the other players made a big deal about changing in the same locker room as a “queer” and told Jose that he should quit the team and try out for the girl’s field hockey team if he wanted to play sports.

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

