

Be an **upstander!** *Not a bystander.*

Project Prevent and Address Bullying (PPAB)

for students with disabilities

For Educators

Northern Illinois University | School Psychology Program

When bullying occurs, there are behaviors other than the bully and the victim, and these behaviors can positively or negatively contribute to the situation.

In a bullying situation, an **upstander** is someone who recognizes when something is wrong and does something to make it right. If an upstander sees or hears about bullying, they will **do something**. This could mean stopping the bully, reporting the event or otherwise helping the victim even after the fact. Upstanders do their best to **support and protect** their peers.

On the other hand, a bystander is someone who sees bullying happening but does not do anything to stop it. People who laugh at something mean a bully says, or who don't say anything when they see bullying happening are bystanders. By doing nothing, the bystander is negatively contributing to the bullying situation.

Bystanders are often afraid of retaliation and fear that their own group of friends will exclude them for going against the bully. Help your students see that it is better to **do something** and be an **upstander** than to be a *bystander*.

There are many different ways to be an upstander. Encourage your students to pick a strategy that fits their personality. They should avoid doing something that is unsafe or makes them feel unsafe. Here are some ways your students can be upstanders:

- Respect others' differences.
- Be kind and compassionate to all students.
- Reach out to new students at school and help them feel comfortable.
- Don't encourage the child who is bullying. Do not join in, laugh or stand guard for them.
- Stop and report untrue and hurtful messages to slow the spread.
- Be a friend to the child who is being bullied. For example, ask the victim of bullying to walk away from the situation with you and your friends or include them in activities with you so they feel safe.
- Show friends how to be an upstander.
- Tell an adult about the bullying.
- Tell the person who is bullying to stop. You can also say something such as, "That isn't funny."

As a teacher, there are strategies you can use in the classroom to help foster upstander behavior in your students:

- Build empathy by finding opportunities to ask your students, "How do you think that made that person feel?" or "How did you feel about that?"
- Build assertiveness skills by encouraging your students to say no when they do not want to do something.
- Praise your students when you see upstander behavior such as being courageous, empathetic or assertive.
- Model these behaviors by being kind and standing up for others.
- Brainstorm with your students ways they would respond when they know someone has been bullied or when they see a bullying situation.
- Practice responses through role play. Think of possible bullying situations and have your students act out how they would react.
- Bullybust.org/educators/activities has additional activities you can use in your classroom — or create your own!

Find additional handouts on our website at go.niu.edu/PPAB



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