



ACTIVITY: GRADES 6-8

Bullying or Joking?

Learn to identify what's bullying, what's joking, and how to deal with it.

No one likes to be bullied, especially by a friend. But how can you tell when a friend is bullying or just joking? In this activity, students think of situations where bullying happens between friends. Then they come up with actions they can take when being bullied or as bystanders to stop the bullying.

Instructions

1. Review the definition of bullying with your students: Bullying is when one or more people repeatedly harm, harass, intimidate, or exclude others. Bullying is unfair and one-sided.
2. Ask students: **Does bullying ever happen between friends?** (Yes.) **Why do you think a friend would bully others in a group of friends?** (To be in charge. To control others. To feel powerful. To feel important.)
3. Emphasize that what starts out as "joking around," "kidding," and "messing with each other" can turn into bullying when one person feels like a line has been crossed.* Elicit other examples of the types of bullying that can happen between friends—for example, teasing, threatening, spreading rumors, and exclusion.

4. Discuss actions students can take to stop the bullying:

If students are being bullied:

- Assertively tell the friend to stop
- Find other people to hang out with
- Talk to a trusted adult

If students are bystanders:

- Don't take part in the bullying
- Offer support by being an ally to the person being bullied
- Take action against the bullying

5. Break students into four groups, one for each type of bullying that can happen between friends. Have each group come up with a situation for the type of bullying their group was assigned (remember: no names!). Then have each group determine actions they can take in that situation to stop the bullying.
6. Have each group present their situation and solutions to the rest of the class.

*Note: If students relate specific bullying incidents, remind them not to use names. Also, be aware that students may disclose bullying after this activity. Go to cfchildren.org/resources/bullying-prevention-resources for suggestions about handling disclosure.