



Confronting Bullying Behavior

STOP: Name It | DROP: Redirect to Kindness | ROLL: Involve Adults

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." **Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Introduction

All of us, for our own reasons, have at some point shied away from confronting bullying behavior. In the moment, it always seems too difficult to do. The thing is, people using bullying behavior are operating on a limited script...in other words, they are only prepared for the victim to be a victim. If we create our own script for such encounters and keep "on script" we can actually stop bullying behavior.

Confronting bullying behavior effectively—whether you are protecting yourself or someone else—operates on three principles: redirection, staying calm and keeping to the script. Remember, you are not doing anything wrong by confronting bullying behavior. You are getting people out of trouble, not into trouble. You are not only helping the victim of bullying behavior, you are helping the person using bullying behavior too. People who are never called upon to change their bullying behavior continue to use it. Inevitably, bullying behavior leads to loss of friendships, missed opportunities and punishments. The older a person gets, the more severe the punishments. It is also good to remind yourself that everyone has a moral compass that points to respect, dignity and kindness. The person using bullying behavior just has a compass in need of adjustment. They already know what they are doing is wrong, and so does everybody else who is a witness to the behavior. They just need someone to tell them to stop.

Step 1 = STOP: Name the Problem: *Be a referee and blow the whistle!*

Bullying behavior often times continues simply because nobody says anything. As a student leader, you have the responsibility, like a referee, to help enforce the rules. With an assertive statement, loudly let everyone know what is happening. Shed light on the inappropriate behavior.

About 80% of the time, the naming of the inappropriate behavior stops the behavior. Sometimes, people are "experimenting" with bullying behavior or they are just being insensitive. Try any of these lines in your script.

"Stop!"

"You are being mean!"

"That is hurtful!"

"What you are saying is not true!"

"We have school rules about how we can treat each other, and you are breaking them!"

"You are hurting his feelings!"

"You are not teasing, you are taunting!"

If *Step 1* does not stop the bullying behavior, sometimes the behavior gets turned toward you. This usually happens through a verbal attack.

So, you need to go to *Step 2*.

Step 2 = DROP: Redirect to Kindness: Calmly go to the "Golden Rule"

Sometimes the person who stands up to defend others gets verbally attacked for speaking up. In this step, it is crucial to stay calm. The goal is to redirect everyone's attention back to the original bullying behavior, which ultimately was something unkind done to someone. By redirecting to the concept of kindness, you are not confronting the person using bullying behavior directly. You are just stating a fact. Remember, you have done nothing wrong. You are simply concerned about the universal truth that everyone wants to be treated with kindness, respect and dignity. Don't go off script. Don't argue. Don't defend. Don't judge. Just simply state the fact that what happened was not kind.

"Everyone deserves kindness."

"No one likes to get hurt."

"Being mean is not the answer."

"We don't have to like everyone, but we don't have to hurt anyone."

"Everybody deserves to be safe."

"The Golden Rule says we should treat others as we would like to be treated."

Usually this calm reminder will stop the bullying behavior. The concept of kindness and love trumps a lot of negative energy. People ultimately want to be nice...you are just helping them to see this.

If *Step 2* does not stop the bullying, sometimes the person will resort to a physical threat or violence. This is called an assault and is against the law, so you need to go to *Step 3*.

Step 3 = Involve Adults: Call for back up!

When nothing else works, the person using bullying behavior may pull out their most effective weapon: the threat of physical violence. In this step, it's time to invoke authority. Remember, you've done nothing wrong. It's the person using bullying behavior that is wrong, and the last thing he or she wants is the negative attention of the group or the authorities (the rest of the school, school staff, parents, or if it comes to it, the police).

Calmly state that you will need to tell an adult. If there is a chair near you, sit down when you say it. Be casual and use non-aggressive body language. It is just a fact beyond your control: nobody has the right to physically harm others. Period. Never. There are all sorts of policies and laws against it. If they have a comeback at all at this point, they'll usually try to take it back to *Step 2* to save face, for which you already have a script that works!

"Assaulting someone is against the law. I will need to tell an adult."

"I can call 911."

"Our principal has told us if we ever feel threatened, we need to tell her."

"My parents are not going to be happy when I tell them what you are saying."

Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying is a huge problem. It seems that more and more, bullying behavior occurs in this realm rather than face to face. This is horrendous because the consequences can be so severe: once something is online, even a proven lie, it stays there forever. Do not wait to confront cyber-bullying; act immediately! The stakes are too high. There are three steps to confronting cyber-bullies. They follow the same pattern of confronting bullying behavior in person.

Step 1 = Name the Problem and Redirect to Kindness: *Post a message*

Speak up for yourself or others by immediately posing a message on multiple forms of social media.

Part 1 of message - Shed light and name it!

"_____ is not telling the truth about _____!"

"That is a lie!"

"This is wrong!"

"Talk to _____ in person, not about them online!"

"Leave _____ alone!"

Part 2 of message - Redirect the attention back to the concept of kindness

"I wish people would just be nice to one another."

"There's always time for kindness."

"We should be nice to one another."

"All of us make mistakes."

"Kindness is important."

Step 2 = Involve Adults: *Call for back up*

Always SAVE and PRINT screenshots of cyber-bullying and send it to the parents of the person using bullying behavior. (Snail mail works best.) Ask your parents or a trusted adult to help you with this process. They should be involved at this step. It might be appropriate to involve your principal or school counselor too, especially if the bullying behavior is creeping into the school day or it is connected to something that happened at school.

Tip = The Power of Six

Find five other friends to fight the bullying behavior with you using their network of social media.

Six different people combined have a huge online footprint in one school. Remember, people using bullying behavior hate transparency. They do not like it when their poor behavior is exposed. Usually, nobody says anything and other people pile on their bullying behavior because they feel a sense of power online. One message telling people to stop might make them think; six or more will remind them that they are not using bullying behavior in a vacuum and that people will find out what they are doing. And, people don't like what they are doing!

Friend-a-Thon

"People fail to get along because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don't know each other; they don't know each other because they have not communicated with each other."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

<input type="checkbox"/> Begin each lap with a handshake <input type="checkbox"/> Friend's Name: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Friend's Birthday: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> 3 things we have in common _____ _____ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> End the lap with a handshake. <i>Now, find a new friend!</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Begin each lap with a handshake <input type="checkbox"/> Friend's Name: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Friend's Birthday: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> 3 things we have in common _____ _____ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> End the lap with a handshake. <i>Now, find a new friend!</i>
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