



GRADE 7

Upstanders and Allies: Taking Action Against Cyberbullying



CYBERBULLYING, DIGITAL DRAMA
& HATE SPEECH

We are kind
& courageous.

How can you respond when cyberbullying occurs?

OVERVIEW

When cyberbullying happens, everyone involved brings their own perspective to the situation. Help students learn about the importance of empathy, how to consider others' feelings, and how to be an upstander when cyberbullying occurs.

[See the U.K. version of this lesson plan](#)

Learning Objectives:

- Consider the different perspectives of those involved in a cyberbullying incident.
- Identify ways to be an upstander or ally to someone being bullied.
- Problem-solve potential challenges to responding to cyberbullying.

Key Vocabulary:

ally

someone who responds to a bullying situation by supporting the person being bullied

cyberbullying

using digital devices, sites, and apps to intimidate, harm, and upset someone

empathy

to imagine the feelings that someone else is experiencing

upstander

someone who responds to a bullying situation by confronting the bully directly or by telling a trusted adult

Key Standards Supported

Common Core ELA

L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.4, L.7.6, RI.7.1, RI.7.2, RI.7.3, RI.7.4, RI.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.1a, SL.7.1b, SL.7.1c, SL.7.1d, SL.7.2, SL.7.3, SL.7.4, SL.7.6, W.7.4, W.7.10

CASEL

1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 2f, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 5f

AASL

I.A.1, I.A.2, I.B.1, I.B.2, I.B.3, I.C.1, I.D.1, I.D.2, I.D.3, I.D.4, II.A.1, II.A.2, II.B.1, II.B.2, II.B.3, II.C.1, II.C.2, II.D.1, II.D.2, II.D.3, III.A.1, III.A.2, III.B.1, III.B.2, III.C.1, III.C.2, III.D.1, III.D.2, IV.B.2, IV.B.4, V.A.2, V.A.3, V.C.1, V.C.3, V.D.1, V.D.2, VI.A.1, VI.A.2, VI.A.3, VI.D.1, VI.D.2, VI.D.3

ISTE

2a, 2b, 2d

What You'll Need

Some resources below are available in Spanish

Classroom resources

- [Lesson Slides](#)
- [Kevin and José Handout Teacher Version](#)
- [Mia Handout](#)
- [Lesson Quiz](#)

Take-home resources

- [Family Tips](#)
- [Family Activity](#)
- [Family Engagement Resources](#)

Lesson Plan

Warm Up: Hurtful or Not?

10 mins.

Before the lesson: As an optional activity before the lesson, have students complete the **Digital Heartbreak** storyline in [Digital Compass™](#) by Common Sense Education. This will help introduce key concepts of this lesson. To see more, check out the [Digital Compass Educator Guide](#).

1. **Ask:** *Does anyone here have a nickname that their family calls them?*

Call on volunteers and follow up by asking: *Do you mind sharing it with us? Or is it embarrassing?* If students are comfortable sharing it, have them do so.

2. **Say:** *OK, so what if, as a joke, I just started calling you that? Would that be OK?*

Call on volunteers to respond. If necessary, clarify that it depends on how the person feels about it. It might be OK, or it might not.

3. **Say:** *OK, what about if I change the nickname up a little? Let's say I add a funny adjective to it. Would that be OK? If you feel comfortable, give an example by adding a relatively harmless adjective to one of your students' nicknames. Alternatively, you can use the example "Sassy Sam" for an imaginary student whose nickname is "Sam."*

Call on volunteers to respond. Students may say it depends on the adjective you choose and your relationship with the person. If necessary, clarify that it also depends on how the person feels about it. If the recipient doesn't like it, then it's not OK.

4. **Ask:** *What about if I choose a negative adjective, like "snarky" -- "Snarky Sam"? Would that be OK to call someone?*

Call on volunteers to respond. Most likely will say no, it's mean, and it's not OK. Some might say it depends on your relationship with the person and whether you're joking. Clarify that the person likely would not feel good about being called that, regardless of your relationship, and so it's probably not OK. If you're really good friends, you tease each other a lot like that, and the person is OK with it, then maybe it's not that bad.

5. **Say:** *All right, last scenario. Let's say I take that negative adjective and nickname, and I post it to every single picture I can find of you online, on Instagram, Snapchat, etc. And I even post a picture of you to my account with the insulting nickname. Would that be OK? Or would it depend on the type of relationship we have?*

Call on volunteers to respond. Most will likely say no, it's not OK. Clarify that you agree, that under no circumstances would it be OK. Identify the behavior as **cyberbullying**, which is *using digital devices, sites, and apps to intimidate, harm, and upset someone.* (Slide 4)

Read: Kevin and José

10 mins.

1. **Say:** *In all those situations, we talked about how one person's actions might make another person feel. What we were doing was called empathizing, or showing empathy. **Empathy** is when you imagine the feelings that someone else is experiencing. (Slide 5) Why do you think it might be important to try to empathize with others? Take turns sharing with your partner. (Slide 6)*

Allow students to pair-share and then call on volunteers. Showing empathy can help students:

- Make decisions about how they treat people.
- Make decisions about how they allow others to treat them.
- Build relationships with others.
- Decide on what they think is right and wrong.

2. **Distribute the Kevin and José Student Handout** and ask students to read the story silently.

3. **Ask:** *Is what José did in this scenario OK? Why, or why not? Take turns sharing with your partner. (Slide 7)*

Call on students to share out. If necessary, clarify that what José did was not OK because, if we were to empathize with Kevin, it's likely that Kevin was extremely embarrassed and even devastated by what happened. If necessary, clarify that this is an example of cyberbullying.

Discuss: **Where Do People Stand?**

20 mins.

1. **Say:** *Could this situation have turned out differently? If so, how? To answer these questions, you're going to first take on the perspective of one of the individuals involved.*

Assemble groups of four students and direct their attention to part two of the handout. Read the directions aloud. Assign a different role to each member of the group or allow groups to choose their own roles. No roles should be duplicated within a group. ([Slide 8](#))

2. **Allow** students five minutes to think about their viewpoints and complete Part 2.
3. **Explain** to students that they will now take turns sharing out with their group what they wrote based on the viewpoint they had. Allow 10 minutes for groups to share out.
4. **Have** students complete the Reflection Questions on the handout.
5. **Call** on students to share out their answers to the Reflection Questions. Capture the different ways that students respond to question No. 2 on [Slide 9](#). Use the [Teacher Version](#) to offer additional ideas.
 - As students provide possible actions, follow up by asking: *Why might that action have been difficult for the person to do? Is there something else they could've done instead?*
 - Point out that some of the actions mentioned are examples of being an upstander or an ally. An **upstander** is someone who responds to a bullying situation by confronting the bully directly or by telling a trusted adult. An **ally** is someone who responds to a bullying situation by supporting the person being bullied (e.g., checking in with them, being a friend to them, etc.). ([Slide 10](#))

Wrap Up: **Mia**

5 mins.

1. **Distribute** the [Mia Student Handout](#) and ask students to read the story and answer the questions that follow independently.
2. **Collect** handouts and use them to assess student learning.
3. **Have** students complete the [Lesson Quiz](#). Send home the [Family Activity](#) and [Family Tips](#).

Additional Resources:

1. **Extend the lesson:** Have students apply what they have learned by completing the "[How To Be An Upstander](#)" activity on TestDrive, a social media simulator co-developed by the Cornell Social Media Lab and Common Sense Education. Students go through a self-guided activity to reinforce key concepts and practice being an upstander. For more information, download the [Social Media TestDrive Educator Guide](#).



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