OUR SPECIAL SUPERPOWER

Teacher notes

Introduction

Purpose:	This activity explores strategies students can use if they see bullying happening.
Audience:	The *Our special superpower* YouTube video is aimed at students aged 9 to 13 years of age, and these activities are intended to be run with the whole class or in small groups.
Approximate duration:	The duration will depend on which of the three activities are conducted. Duration for each of the activities is: • Activity 1: Bystanders can help stop bullying — 10–15 minutes • Activity 2: Learn strategies on how to respond if you see bullying — 30–40 minutes • Activity 3: What's our bystander strategy? — 30 minutes.

BEFORE you run the classroom discussion starter activities, ensure:

- students are familiar with what bullying is — if not plan for a short time in the activity to discuss
- you develop ground rules with the class — this activity is to talk generally about what to do about bullying and that students can talk with you after class if they have a specific issue
- **there is currently no obvious or immediate bullying issue — if there is, this may not be the right topic for your class**. In some cases, it may be better to delay this activity until the problems are addressed
- students know classroom rules for talking and contributing ideas: remind students that bullying is a sensitive topic and it is important to use respectful listening
- **you avoid using class role play related to bullying as it can raise issues and cause distress to some students. Instead, use the optional practice/rehearsal of strategies if you conduct Activity 2**
- you know how to use **protective interrupting** if a student begins to reveal inappropriate personal information in front of other students

Important to note

Discussion guidelines

A safe environment must be created and maintained to encourage students to speak freely, feel supported and avoid discussions that may cause distress.

You may need to adjust the guidance you provide to students depending on your knowledge of your students' histories and experiences with bullying.

When discussing bullying in the classroom, encourage students to **talk in general terms** and about the whole school, using sentences such as:

- "Some people might … and this could cause a person to feel …"
- "At some schools …"
- "There have been times when …"
- Encourage students to justify their comments and responses, for example, "I think this because…"

Justifying and explaining points of view will enable all members of the group to gain a deeper understanding of the thinking and reasoning processes that are taking place.

Protective interrupting

Protective interrupting is a useful tool for teachers when engaging in classroom discussions about bullying. It is possible a student will begin to disclose personal information, or a teacher might sense that a student is about to make such a disclosure. Protective interrupting aims to protect students from the consequences of revealing inappropriate personal information in front of other students. In such a situation, the teacher should acknowledge they have heard the student by using words like 'That sounds important', but stop them divulging any further details. The teacher should suggest the student talks privately with them after the formal discussion or, if possible, ask the student if they would like to leave the classroom then to continue the conversation. If a student should make a disclosure of bullying currently occurring, your role is to listen calmly, show support for the student, acknowledge what they have told you and, once the student has finished, discuss with them what you could both do next. Ensure you are aware of your school's policy and or procedure for dealing with bullying.

Appropriate responses

This student engagement activity provides an opportunity to empower student voice. However, at times it may be necessary to ensure that student responses on what to say and do in response to bullying are appropriate.

Safe online behaviour discussions

It is acknowledged that most social media platforms and apps set a minimum age of 12 or 13 years and above, indicating that students in Years 3 to 6 should not typically be engaged with the majority of these online services.

Texting, however, is not age restricted and is a common site for problem interactions to occur between peers. The purpose of raising the conversation of safe online behaviour with this age group is to serve as a preventative intervention that provides younger students with the knowledge and skills, including language, to understand the risks and seek assistance when required.

Important note: Teaching students helpful ways to respond if bullying happens can form part of your school's approach to preventing and responding to bullying. Staff involvement to positively resolve bullying issues is still essential.

Teachers must communicate throughout these activities that they understand and respect that students may not feel safe standing up to bullying directly in some cases. **Bystanders should not be made to feel responsible for stopping the bullying.**

Materials provided on Bullying. No Way! website:

- Our special superpower YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5QQbiwNvzYU
- Our special superpower classroom discussion starter which includes *Teacher Notes* (this document), instructions for the three activities with further information, images to print and worksheets for students

You will need to provide:

- a copy of the definition of bullying as appropriate for your students (see Primary Fact Sheet https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/resource/fact-sheets/documents/primary-school-students-cyberbullying-fact-sheet.pdf OR Secondary Fact Sheet https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/resource/fact-sheets/documents/secondary-school-students-cyberbullying-fact-sheet.pdf)
- printed copies of Activity 1: Student worksheet (on A4) as selected if running activities in small groups OR
- a printed copy of Activity 1: Student worksheet (on A3) if running as a whole-class activity.
- *Images for Strategies* pdf to display onscreen for Activity 2 (optional)

Steps to run the activities

1. Select and prepare the materials you wish to use

Select the activity (or activities) you wish to use. The activities build in a logical sequence, but can be used flexibly if that better suits students' learning needs. Briefly, the activities involve:

- **Activity 1**: learning more about things that bystanders can do that can help to stop bullying (and things not to do)
- **Activity 2**: exploring what each of the strategies means, and practising and discussing what it is like to use that strategy
- **Activity 3**: deciding which strategies are appropriate in different situations.

2. Watch the video Our special superpower

The video is available to view: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5QQbiwNvzYU

Duration: 2 minutes, 30 seconds

3. Introduce the task and provide copies of the worksheet as selected

- Students can work as a whole class or in small groups.
- Your role is facilitating the class contributions and discussion, or walking around the small groups and discussing their answers and thoughts.
- Run the selected activities using the Teacher Notes and Teacher Answer guides for each activity.