

Stand Together

Ideas for a safe and supportive school community

Lesson plan for Years 9-10

Introduction

Purpose of the lesson

- Explain the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence
- Discuss the meaning of a safe and supportive school community and the definition of bullying
- Generate and consider students' ideas to make their school a safe and supportive place for all.

Pedagogical form

- Community of inquiry – open collaborative inquiry

Key words

- Safe, supportive, bullying, consider, evaluate, reflect, action, justify, community, collaborate

Pre lesson preparation

- Read the [Ideas for a safe and supportive school community Overview](#) for information about:
 - Community of inquiry
 - Student voice
 - Managing personal disclosures
 - Links to curriculum, key documents and references
- Download and prepare Year 9-10 lesson materials
 - [National Day of Action poster](#) displayed in your room
 - [What is bullying?](#) handout displayed on A4 page
 - [Ideas for our school](#) handout on A3
 - [Ideas that make an impact](#) handout on A4
- Collect additional materials
 - Ball or beanbag to serve as a 'talking tool'
 - Cards (A5) and whiteboard markers
 - Student wristbands (registered schools can order)

Lesson duration (60-80 minutes)

This lesson is approximately 60-80 minutes long. It can be run in the lead up to or on the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence (third Friday in March).

If students have developed competence with the community of inquiry approach, they will be able to sustain a longer inquiry and would therefore need more time to complete each activity. If this is the case you may wish to reduce the content (fewer questions) or increase the time allowed for each activity.

Follow up activity – presentation of ideas

Teachers can support the sharing of students' ideas developed through this lesson with the wider school community as part of National Day of Action activities (e.g. through a presentation on assembly or an article in a newsletter).



Teaching and Learning Activities

1. What is a safe and supportive school? (20-30 mins)

This activity sets the scene for the National Day of Action, explains the purpose of the lesson and explores students' understanding of 'bullying' and of a 'safe and supportive school community'.

Introduction to the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence

Look at the **National Day of Action** poster and tell the students that schools all across Australia will 'take a stand together' against bullying and violence on the National Day of Action on the third Friday in March. Explain this lesson is about sharing their ideas about how to 'take a stand together' against bullying and ensure the school is a safe and supportive place for everyone.

Teacher notes

Introduce students to the **protocols for a community of inquiry** discussion (see Overview).

If students begin to talk about specific instances or other students, remember the information on personal disclosure (see Overview) and **encourage the students to talk in general terms** and about the whole school, for example:

- *Some people might ... and this could cause a person to feel ...*
- *At some schools ...*
- *There have been times when ...*

You do not need to ask all of the inquiry and reflection questions provided. They have been included to support your discussion if required.

Encourage students to **justify their comments** and responses, for example, *I think this because...* This will enable all members of the group to gain a deeper understanding of the thinking and reasoning processes that are taking place.

Take notes (dot points/key words) throughout the community of inquiry discussion on a poster or whiteboard as students talk.

Definition of bullying (5 minutes)

Display the **What is bullying?** handout on a poster size chart. Read the definition of bullying and point out the main aspects of patterns of repeated behaviour that causes harm, distress or fear. The subsequent Warm up activity involves students discussing generalisations about bullying. However, if students express diverse views about the definition, consider using Alternative Warm up activity: A shared definition of bullying instead.

Warm up activity: Generalisations about bullying (10 minutes)

Students sit in a circle where they can see and respond to each other. Teacher says: *Sometimes we make assumptions about people or situations based on unsound generalisations. I'm going to read you a generalisation related to bullying. I want you to tell me if this generalisation is sound or unsound, and why you think that?*

Choose **one** of the generalisations below and explore with students:

- People who bully others feel powerful.
- Those who don't stand up to bullying behaviours are showing weakness.
- People who bully others have no fear.
- Bullying behaviour is never acceptable.
- Bullying or violent behaviour stems from fear.
- No one has the right to make others feel unsafe. (Everyone has the right to be treated fairly)
- We are all responsible for making a difference.

Alternative Warm up activity: A shared definition of bullying (10 minutes)

Teacher writes any significantly different ideas to the definition poster based on students' answers:

- Do you agree/disagree with this definition? Why?
- Is there anything you would like to add to the definition?

Longer version of the Warm up activity: Generalisations about bullying (minimum of 20 minutes)

This alternative warm up activity will result in a lesson longer than 80 minutes overall. This activity would require a minimum of 20 minutes.

Divide the class into small groups of 4-5 students. Ask each group to consider one of the generalisations. More than one group can consider the same generalisation. This would allow for consideration of a greater range of perspectives.

Teacher says: *Sometimes we make assumptions about people or situations based on unsound generalisations about other people. Consider the generalisation you have been given and respond to the following questions in your small group:*

- Is the generalisation sound/unsound? Why do you think this?
- Why would some people make this generalisation?
- How can we avoid making unsound generalisations?

Discussion: bullying behaviours (15 minutes)

Students sit in a circle where they can see and respond to each other. Use the Talking Tool. Guide discussion by selecting from the following questions (ensuring a positive first and last question):

- What does it mean to feel safe and supported at school?
- Is bullying always highly visible to all?

- Is it always easy to recognise bullying behaviours? Why/Why not?
- Why do some people choose to bully others?
- In what ways are bullying and fear connected?
- Is it possible for those who choose to bully others to make positive changes to their behaviour?
- What could we do as a class/school community to ensure that our peers choose not to bully others?
- What would a school look like if it is safe and supportive and where students don't bully each other?

2. Ideas for our school (30-40 mins)

This activity gives students a chance to brainstorm their ideas for a safe and supportive school environment.

Teacher notes

For the group activity, give each group one piece of card to write on.

For the evaluation of ideas give each group the **Ideas for our school** and **Ideas that will make a positive impact** handouts.

Our ideas

Introduce this activity by saying: *Our task is to come up with ideas about how to 'take a stand together' against bullying and make our school a better place. Together we will consider and evaluate those ideas in order to choose ideas that will make a real impact and ensure we have a safe and supportive school that takes a stand against bullying.*

Reinforce that big and small ideas are both okay. Ideas can be for individual, class or school actions.

Group activity

Students move into groups of three to four. Each group works collaboratively to come up with one idea that could help the school to prevent bullying and be a safe and supportive place for all. They write the idea on the card provided (large enough so it can be seen by all group members).

Students then return to sit in the circle with their ideas in front of them. Around the circle, each group shares their idea and gives a brief description of 25 words or less. Then they place their idea on a white board or wall

Community of inquiry to evaluate ideas

Remind students that in a community of inquiry, all ideas are valued, however not all ideas are going to be as useful as others. Sometimes the group will need to work on the ideas together to make them more useful or appropriate for the task.



As a class, students initially sort the ideas. Teacher starts the evaluation of ideas by asking:

- Are there any ideas that are similar or would fit together? Let's combine these ideas into one idea.
- Are there any ideas that may not be possible to action at our school at present? Can we modify the idea to make it possible? If not, we will put the idea aside to think about at another time.

Students move back into small groups, and each group selects one or more idea (up to 5 ideas per group, depending on the number initially generated) to refine and further develop. Students discuss and write a comment on their copy of the **Ideas for our school** based on the questions on the **Ideas that will make a positive impact** handout.

Description:

Is the aim of the ideas writing in clear, active and positive language in 25 words or less?

Key questions:

1. How will this idea make a positive impact in the school?
2. How will we know that it's had an impact? What will be different?
3. Could it possibly have a negative impact or create new problems? Can we avoid this happening?

Other information to explain to others why this is a good idea:

- Can students implement this idea?
- Will it involve all students, staff and parents?
- Do we have or can we get the resources needed?
- Can we set up this idea this year?

Students display their completed **Ideas for our school** poster, and briefly present their work to the class. Together, the ideas become a list of actions to 'take a stand together' against bullying and help the school be a safe and supportive place for everyone.

The students' ideas and evaluation can then be made into a poster of ideas suitable to share with school community on the National Day of Action.

3. Reflection - How did we work together? (10 mins)

This activity is a student reflection on the lesson.

Students sit in a circle where they can see and respond to each other. Teacher leads discussion by selecting from the suggested reflective questions. Students use the Talking Tool while sharing their thoughts.

Questions

- How well did we work together as a group? What more could we do to improve this in the future?



- Did we come up with useful ideas today?
- Were we able to effectively synthesise our initial ideas into a list of ideas that will make a positive impact?
- What did you enjoy about the process?
- What did you find challenging or difficult?
- In what ways did this process help you to understand more about the issue of bullying?
- In what ways did this process help you to understand your own values in relation to bullying?
- What did you learn or think about that was new or different?
- How will you apply your new ways of thinking to other issues in the future?

Taking a stand together

If you have the Bullying. No Way! Take a Stand Together wristbands, display to students and explain that wearing them shows that everyone contributes to creating a safe and supportive school community.

Students pair up. To be awarded their own wristband, students tell their partner how they are going to 'take a stand together' and make our school community safe and supportive for everyone. To conclude, students then give each other wristbands.

Teacher notes: NEXT STEPS

This lesson can stand alone or it can be the first step in a project to develop the students' ideas into real action in the school.

Some next steps could be:

- Students taking local action individually based on ideas from the lesson (as above)
- The ideas poster can be further developed with a follow up lesson or a more in depth project.
- Students work as a class to develop and implement the 'top' ideas into a project either in follow-up lessons or a special school community action day for the National Day of Action
- Students contribute to a whole-school process of developing and implementing ideas into a project (this is a longer term commitment on the part of the school).