

TALKING ABOUT BULLYING: CLASSROOM DISCUSSION STARTERS

All years: Exploring counter-examples

This discussion starter supports teachers to scaffold a collaborative discussion with students as a whole class or in small groups. The discussion requires about 20 minutes. It can be used as a stand-alone discussion or to conclude one of the other classroom discussion topics if time permits. (Refer to [How to use](#) for more information.)

Outline

1. Present the definition of bullying

Share the definition of bullying with your students. Explain that this is how bullying is generally defined by society; however, in order to fully understand bullying, we need to unpack the ideas.

2. Testing the strength of reasoning with counter-examples

Ask students to consider one or more of the following statements and come up with counter-examples of a time when this would not be the case. A counter-example is a statement/example that disproves a given or implied general statement.

Remind the students to give reasons for their responses:

- People who choose to bully feel powerful.
- Bullying behaviours should be ignored.
- If someone else in the class takes action, then it is okay for me to ignore the situation.
- Inactive/passive bystanders are people that are afraid of conflict.
- We should treat people in the same manner that they treat us.

As appropriate and necessary, use any of these additional questions to explore the students' answers:

- Why do you think that? (justification)
- Can anyone build on that idea?
- Does anyone have an alternative suggestion/different possibility?
- Can you clarify that?
- Could there be another way to think about this?
- What might someone say if they disagreed with this?
- What might follow from this?

3. Reflect on thinking and learning

At the conclusion of the activity, take five minutes to reflect on the learning:

- How did we work as a community of learners?
- What new thinking and learning has taken place for our class community today?
- How can we apply this new thinking and learning to our relationships with peers at school and beyond?