TALKING ABOUT BULLYING: CLASSROOM DISCUSSION STARTERS

All years: Similarities and differences between the concepts of bullying and fighting/arguing

Outline

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.)

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. **Create a T-chart through discussion**
   Draw a T-chart on the whiteboard with one column titled ‘Bullying’ and the other ‘Fighting/arguing’. Students brainstorm criteria for each concept — record responses under the appropriate headings.

   Students consider any similarities between the responses listed in each column — circle these responses. When students have identified the similarities, have them think about the criteria that have not been circled — these are the differences.

   Ask the students to consider and discuss the following questions and give reasons for their responses:
   - Are there any differences that we may have overlooked?
   - Why are these differences important when we are thinking about bullying?
   - How does this help us to understand more about bullying?

   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.