Handout Activity 1 – What I would tell my Year 7 self

Why talk about bullying?

The National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence is held on the third Friday in March each year. This day is an opportunity for students, teachers, parents and the whole community to take a stand together against bullying and violence. This activity is part of the work being done across Australia to ‘take a stand together’ on the National Day of Action.

As senior students, you can share your insights and what you’ve learnt with younger students to help make a safe and supportive school community for all. Younger students will listen to your ideas and advice, and hearing from students about their perspectives on bullying is important for the whole school.

Some key facts about bullying

Bullying is something we hear about often both at school and in the workplace. However, people can hold quite diverse views on what bullying actually is. The national definition of bullying agreed to by all state and territory departments is provided in this handout.

Bullying has negative impacts for students who are bullied, those who do the bullying and the students who witness it. Involving students in the school’s anti-bullying strategies is an important part of the solution.

Australian research shows that bullying peaks during the years of transition to high school and early high school, and then tends to decline in senior school.

Some students are more likely to be bullied – those who stand out as different, those with a disability and those who react more strongly to teasing. Some students are also more likely to bully others.

Bullying is serious: even what appears to be ‘mild’ bullying can have a devastating impact on students if they don’t feel safe coming to school and are not able to focus on learning and having fun with friends.

Steps for the activity

This activity involves you working in small groups to prepare a short presentation suitable for students in their first year of high school. Presentations can relate to the experience of being bullied, bullying others or witnessing bullying. This task is designed to be completed in small groups, although it may be done by students individually if you prefer.

The aim of your presentation is to help younger students to build skills and strategies for dealing with bullying.
1. **Determine groups and roles**
Establish small groups and decide the various roles of students – group facilitator (who will make sure everyone contributes), scribe, spokesperson, etc.

2. **Brain storm and discuss**
Take yourself back into ‘a younger you’ – when you were starting your first year of high school.

**Discuss** your thoughts about the following questions. **Write or create a mind map** of your ideas and thoughts about:
- What did you feel confident about when starting high school?
- How did you feel about fitting in?
- What were you worried about?
- Where did you get support?
- Did you experience situations where some students had ‘social power’ over others? What was the basis for having more social power (e.g. social status, learning abilities, physical strength, etc)? How did this play out in the classroom and in situations?
- What were the attitudes amongst the students back then about appropriate ways to get on with others and about bullying?
- How is it different now that you are a senior student?

**Discuss** your thoughts and experiences related to bullying in early high school which might include being bullied, seeing bullying happening to others, bullying others:
- What situations did you face or witness?
- What options did you have, how did you weigh these up and how did you decide what to do?
- How did it turn out?
- What might you have done differently with what you know now as a senior student?

Using your notes, decide on some key points to include in a short presentation for a ‘Younger you’.
Focus particularly on things you wish you had known at the beginning of high school.

3. **Create your presentation** (spoken max 3 minutes, written max 200 words)
Options for your presentation include:
- A spoken presentation on assembly, ‘What I would tell my Year 7 self’
- Short magazine article, ‘Ten things I wish I’d known’
- Advice column, ‘Just starting high school?’
- A collage representing the key messages
- A ‘Dear me’, ‘Dear Yr 7’ or ‘Dear 11/12’ personal letter.

Provide specific advice or comments around the issue, and focus on positive resolution. Share relevant feelings about experiences that students may also experience. Frame your advice as suggestions that are suitable for younger students, including where to go for help.

**Personal Reflection**
At the end of the activity, you may like to reflect on the following questions.
- Did you learn anything new about yourself (or your classmates) in this activity?
- From your initial ideas, how did you select what advice to include in your presentation?
Definition of bullying

The national definition of bullying for schools, developed by educators across Australia as part of the National Safe Schools Framework, is:

Bullying is an ongoing misuse of power in relationships through repeated verbal, physical and/or social behaviour that causes physical and/or psychological harm. It can involve an individual or a group misusing their power over one or more persons. Bullying can happen in person or online, and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert).

Online bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies, e.g. the internet or mobile devices.

Bullying of any form or for any reason can have long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.

Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

In short, bullying is an ongoing misuse of power involving a pattern of harmful verbal, physical or social behaviour.

https://bullyingnoway.gov.au/WhatsBullying/DefinitionOfBullying