



# Units for Building Character

## GRADE EIGHT

### Making A Difference

Targets:

Exploring Group Dynamics  
How to Have a Moral Conscience in Grade 8  
Harassment and Power: the Positive and the Negative  
How Do I Fit In?  
"I Am Going to Make a Difference"



## Intermediate Targets

<b>Grade 7</b>	<b>Grade 8</b>
Exploring Group Dynamics	Exploring Group Dynamics
Fairness and Friendship	Moral Conscience
What is Sexual Harassment and How Do I Deal With It?	Harassment and Power
Speakers Corner	How Do I Fit In?
Unit Extensions	I am Going to Make a Difference

## **Expectation List**

### **Language –Oral & Visual Communication**

Students will:

- express and respond to a range of ideas and opinions concisely, clearly and appropriately;
- use the specialized vocabulary appropriate to the topic in oral presentations (e.g., investigations in mathematics, demonstrations in science); and
- use tone of voice and body language to clarify meaning during conversations and presentations.

### **Health & Physical Education – Health Living**

Students will:

- analyze situations that are potentially dangerous to personal safety (e.g., gang violence) and determine how to seek assistance;
- analyze situations (e.g., hitchhiking, gang violence, violence in relationships) that are potentially dangerous to personal safety; and
- identify support services (e.g., the school guidance department, shelters, Kids' Help Phone) that assist victims of violence and explain how to access them.

## **Unit Overview**

### **Task Content**

Students will be brainstorming, discussing and responding in a variety of ways to group and social dynamics topics. These topics relate to bullying and social responsibility.

### **Task Summary**

Students will be introduced to a variety of social dynamic terms and to group dynamics through the exploration of power, moral disengagement and social justice. Students are at a cognitive level where they should be able to step back and reassess past behaviours and formulate opinions and strategies that would aid them in potentially violent / negative group incidents or situations.

Students are given opportunities to examine group dynamics, moral disengagement, power imbalance and the concept of a “just society”. Through the subtasks students will be asked to relate and reflect on these concepts in relation to their own lives, with specific reference to bullying, gang violence and social justice. Students will discuss community and peer allies that could assist in reducing tensions, supporting victims and helping create a “just society”. Students will be asked to write a speech that outlines understanding and conviction to making a difference.

### **Culminating Task Assessment**

Becoming a morally responsible group member is not an easy task. A person must have deep convictions and a positive self-concept. Students will assume the role of principal, parent, student or help phone operator and list their attributes and plan of action that will make a difference in dealing with negative group situations that could lead to violence.

### **Links to Prior Knowledge**

#### **Students need to have acquired knowledge of the following:**

- 1) different types of bullying (e.g., physical, verbal, indirect)
- 2) different roles people play in a bullying situation (victim, bully, bully supporter, onlooker, and intervenor)
- 3) problem-solving process
- 4) S.A.F.E (S-seeking help, A-assert yourself, F-formulate a plan, E-educate your friends)
- 5) harassment

- 6) people in the community that can help with harassment

**Students also need to be able to apply the following skills:**

- 1) response journal writing and speech writing
- 2) drama presentation (voice, gesture, role playing)

**Notes to Teacher**

Prior to teaching this unit, please refer to the background information.

During the unit, local events in the media and in the schoolyard may arise in classroom discussions. Please emphasize the need to act responsibly in group situations. Make it clear that diffusion of responsibility cannot be used as an excuse, rather social justice and its implications urge us to take responsibility within our communities. During any moral teaching it is difficult not to preach; however, it's important for students to hear the high ground; they seem to hear enough of the negative. Please emphasize the positive things youth do, as well as discussing the negative things.

## Background Information: Intermediate

### ***Bullying Overview***

Bullying is a negative social interaction in which aggression and power are combined.

What are the defining elements of bullying?

1. There is a power imbalance between bully and victim. The power imbalance can take several forms. Among them are:

**role:** superior position in hierarchy vs. inferior position

**size:** bigger vs. smaller

**number:** many vs. one

**social status:** leader of peer network vs. outsider

**ability:** skilled vs. novice

**ethno cultural/religious:** majority vs. minority

2. The bully intends to cause distress/hurt.
3. The victim experiences distress/hurt.
4. The bullying actions are repeated over time.

### **What are the different types of bullying behaviours?**

Bullying behaviours range from mild to severe.

#### **1. Physical**

Physical aggression such as biting, hair pulling, pinching, punching, spitting, etc.. It also includes damaging another person's property.

#### **2. Verbal**

Abusive telephone calls, extorting money or material possessions, intimidation or threats of violence, name calling, racist remarks or teasing, sexually suggestive or abusive language, spreading malicious or false rumours.

#### **3. Relational**

**Indirect** relational bullying can be manipulative, sneaky and subtle. It includes manipulating relationships, and ruining friendships; purposely excluding, ignoring and isolating someone, and sending (often anonymous) poisonous notes.

**Direct** relational bullying is often accompanied by verbal and physical bullying. Rude gestures and making mean faces are examples.

In general, boys tend to use more direct (ie. physical) types of bullying and girls tend to use more indirect (ie. relational) forms of bullying.

***What are the different roles people play in a bullying situation?***

- **victim or target\***
- **bully\***
- **bystander\***: people who communicate approval of the bully by joining in, standing close to the bully, laughing, etc.

**onlooker** - people who are present and witness the bullying episode

**intervenor** - an individual who helps the victim

\*These are the three basic roles in a bullying situation.

### ***Highlights from Bullying Research***

(Pellegrini et. al., 1999; Pepler & Craig, 1995; O'Connell et. al., 1999)

#### **Anonymous Surveys**

- 7-15% of students report bullying others during the current school term
- 10-20% of students report being bullied during the current school term
- 83% of students report it is unpleasant to observe others being bullied

## Observational Research of Playground Interaction

Bullying occurs approximately every 7 minutes on school playgrounds.

Peers are present in 85% of bullying episodes on school playgrounds, and play the role of onlooker (54% of the time), bully supporter (21% of the time), or intervenor (25% of the time).

### What are the signs of being bullied?

Aside from the obvious signs that indicate physical bullying such as bruises, torn clothing, missing personal items (hat, jacket, school supplies), look for other signs.

1. **Avoidance:** Children who are being bullied avoid certain areas of the school, want to arrive late, stay close to the teacher on duty, stay in the classroom at lunch time, or go to the nurse/office at recess because they don't feel well. Sometimes children may try to avoid school by claiming to be ill, or refuse to go to school altogether.
  2. **Distress:** Although they may claim that nothing is wrong, victims may exhibit distress by changes in sleep patterns and in attitude about school. Poor concentration, increased academic difficulties, increased activity level, or increased sensitivity to small problems or frustrations may be other signs.
  3. **Withdrawal:** Children who are experiencing bullying may withdraw from their family and friends because of shame and embarrassment, and damage to self-esteem. They may be reluctant to join new groups or to try new experiences.
- **Teasing/Taunting:**  
Teasing is playful, and enjoyed by both parties. Usually in one-on-one or small group situations with close friends.  
  
Taunting is hurtful and not enjoyed by one party, one person has the power. This usually occurs in larger group situations.



## What should children do to become intervenors?

Children need to know that by doing "nothing" they are part of the problem. To be an effective intervenor, they can choose from the following.

- 1) Confront the bully in an assertive, but nonaggressive manner. Label the behaviour as bullying and tell the bully to stop.
- 2) Report the bullying to school staff.

### **Tattling/Telling**

**Tattling** happens when someone is trying to get someone else into trouble.

**Telling** happens when someone is trying to get someone out of trouble.

- 3) Use humour or distraction to stop the bullying behaviour.
- 4) Provide comfort and support to the victim.

## What should victims do?

Victims usually cannot solve the bullying problem on their own because of the power imbalance. Victims should be encouraged to choose the most appropriate of the following actions:

- If possible, ignore the bullying and walk away (ignoring works best when bullying is mild.) Possible strategies to use to cope:  
1) count to 10      2) find someone to talk to      3) find another friend
- Communicate with the bully in an assertive, nonaggressive manner. For example, "That hurts my feelings, and I want you to stop." (*Make sure you use appropriate language on how you feel and what is expected of the bully.*)
- Report the bullying to a trusted adult at school.

## **Developmental Gains Related to Junior/Intermediate Anti-Bullying Curriculum**

- Early adolescents are actively constructing new identities that accommodate the significant changes in their mental and physical selves.
- Friendships play a crucial role in identity formation because close friendships provide support and consolidation for the identity adolescents are constructing (Cairns & Cairns, 1994).
- Clusters of close friends become more tightly knit, and the resultant peer clusters develop norms and behavioural similarities, which either support or compete with those of other social influences such as the family or school (Cairns & Cairns, 1994).
- Clusters of close friends become highly exclusive, as adolescents group themselves based on similarities in aggression, academic and athletic ability, timing of puberty, popularity, etc.
- Within clusters of friends, strong reciprocal forces operate on all members, promoting conformity with respect to lifestyle choices (modes of dress, preferred music, etc.). Desire to be part of the group may weaken inhibitions against direct and indirect bullying.
- Breaches or deviations from group conformity pressures form a basis for ridicule, teasing, and exclusion.
- Adolescents judge one another by the company they keep. Because their identities are not yet consolidated, they are often reluctant to associate with peers who might detract from the social identity they desire. Bullying at this age may be a clumsy attempt to differentiate themselves from peers who do not conform to their desired social image.
- Adolescent friendships are frequently "reshuffled" as adolescents mature at different rates, and develop interests, values, and identities that take them in new and different directions.
- Increases in interactions with opposite-sex peers usher in themes of sexual attractiveness, popularity, and rivalry that may give rise to bullying behaviour. A breach in trust within an intimate friendship is a common precipitating factor for indirect bullying.

## References

Cairns, R.B., & Cairns, B.D. (1994). *Lifelines and Risks - Pathways of Youth in our Times*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

O'Connel, P., Pepler, D. & Craig, W. (1999). Peer involvement in bullying: insights and challenges for intervention. *Journal of Adolescence*, 22/4, 437-452.

Pellegrini, A.D., Bartini, M. & Brooks, F. (1999). School bullies, victims and aggressive victims: Factors relating to group affiliation and victimization in early adolescence. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 91/2, 216-224.

Pepler, D.J. & Craig, W.M., (1995). A peek behind the fence: Naturalistic observations of aggressive children with remote audiovisual recording. *Developmental Psychology*, 31/4, 548-553.

**Note: All of the above Background Information was contributed by Joanne Cummings of the LaMarsh Centre for Research on Violence and Conflict Resolution. Joanne served as a consultant for this writing process.**

## List of Subtasks

### **1) Exploring Group Dynamics - CD Reviewing Bullying Concepts**

- Ground Rules
- What If Scenarios

### **2) Case Study – Diffusion of Responsibility – Social Contagion**

Students will read or role-play a case study. Students complete questions. This is to review terminology and launch the topic of diffusion of responsibility within a group. The rest of the class will concentrate on the loss of self within a group setting and the negative impacts. Students are encouraged to rethink negative group influences through a journal response and discussion.

### **Project Ideas**

### **3) How to Have a Moral Conscience in Grade 8**

Through group work, students will be introduced to eight mechanisms of moral disengagement. After discussing these mechanisms and gender differences that seem to occur, students will be encouraged to make suggestions as to how our school/class can generate a change in attitudes. How can we rehumanize ourselves?

**Sympathy or Empathy** - worksheet, cartoon strip

### **4) Power: the Positive and the Negative**

Students will explore issues of power. Through role-plays students will demonstrate how people use their power. Students will be able to identify the power role as being positive or negative. Students should be able to understand the feelings of empowerment and powerlessness. Students will begin to explore major power differentials in modern society.

### **5) Social Justice: How Do I Fit In?**

The concept of a Just Society will be presented and explored. The concept of ally will be introduced. Through group brainstorming and journal response, students will explore their role and commitment to social justice. Students will be encouraged to take small steps to reach the larger goal.

### **6) “I am going to make a difference”**

Becoming a morally responsible group member is not an easy task. A person must have deep convictions and a positive self-concept. Students will assume the role of principal, parent, student or help phone operator and list their attributes and plan of action that will make a difference in dealing with negative group situations that could lead to violence.

## Exploring Group Dynamics

### LESSON 1, 2, 3, & 4

#### Time Required

- four 30 minute lessons

#### Description

Students will review the rules and sign the contract to ensure a safe and open environment for discussion.

Using the Bullying Concepts Review CD, students will explore all the bullying terminology needed to begin this unit.

#### Expectations

Students will:

- express ideas and opinions confidently but without trying to dominate discussion (Language).

#### Teaching/Learning Strategies

- small groups
- students working as a whole class
- discussion
- think/pair/share

## LESSON 1

### Materials

- BLM Ground Rules for Discussion Contract
  - Bully Free Classroom page 20
  - Bullying Concepts Review CD
  - projector
1. Ground Rules for Discussion
    - a) Discuss the Ground Rules for Discussion
    - b) Read ***Our Classroom is a Place Where*** from Bully Free Classroom (in the resource kit)
    - c) Students sign the contract
  2. Show 1<sup>st</sup> slide of CD
    - a) divide into small groups (let students choose, better discussion with friends)
    - b) brainstorm group definition for bully, bullied, bystander, and the bullying cycle
    - c) as a whole group, define each

### Ground Rules for Discussion Contract

1. **Respectful Listening:** I agree to give everyone respect, including myself. I agree to listen to others in the group without interruptions, and I expect that others in the group will listen to me. When I want to speak when we are all assembled; I will raise my hand. When we are taking turns by going around the circle, I will wait until it is my turn.
2. **Keep Confidentiality:** I agree to keep what comes up in the group to myself. This means I won't repeat what someone says without his/her permission, even to other members of the group outside the meeting.
3. **No Put-Downs:** I agree not to put down, make fun of, minimize, or attack other people.
4. **Offer Amnesty:** I agree not to blame, or "get back at" later anyone for what he/she says in this group. Exception: If someone says that he/she is being hurt now, or is going to hurt him/herself or someone else, I will get that person help by talking to an adult.
5. **The Right to Pass:** I agree to do my part to make the group work, but I have the right not to talk in the group when I don't want to.
6. **Respect Feelings:** Everyone in the group will sometimes feel hurt, sad, bored or angry. These feelings are part of the healing and change process. I agree to respect my feelings and the feelings of other group members.
7. **Trying on the Process:** I agree to try on the process of this group. I don't have to agree with it or accept it, just try it on.
8. **Taking Care of Myself:** I agree to take charge of my own needs. I will make myself comfortable and I will ask for help when I need it. I will try and have fun during the process.
9. **Working Inclusively:** I agree to work with all group members. I understand that when we break into pairs or smaller groups, it will always be done randomly, so that we will have opportunities to work with everyone in the group.
10. **We Value Honour and Diversity:** I agree to respect the differences that others bring to this process, and honour the experiences and perspectives of others.

I have read and understand the above concepts. I agree to abide by the above courtesies when participating in any classroom or group discussion.

Student's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON 2

### Materials

- Bullying Concepts Review CD
- projector
- Mr. Peabody's Apple By Madonna
- "What If?" scenarios, **Rumor as Revenge, Suppose You Were Teased?, Suppose You Were Excluded** and **Suppose You Were Bullied?**
- Activity Sheet **Bystander?** and **Rumor... Rumor...**
- School Code of Conduct

1. Show slides 2, 3, and 4
  - a) discuss picture (Who is really the bully and why?)
2. Show slide 5 ~ **Key concept ~ "A bully is not how they look, but how they act."**  
Show slide 6 ~ discuss
3. Show slide 7 ~ definitions - types of bullies or bullying?  
Show slide 8 ~ verbal - discuss BLM **"What If?" Rumor as Revenge**  
Activity Sheet **Rumor... Rumor...**  
Could also read Mr. Peabody's Apple here  
  
Show slide 9 ~ Relational - Indirect/Direct  
Show slide 10 ~ Victim - **Key points: repeated, negative, one or more**
4. Show slide 11 ~ Bullying Cycle - **Key points: targeting, initiating, escalating everyday behaviour**
5. Show slide 12 ~ Choices of a Bystander - **Key points: to be proactive, walk away and tell or intervene (if it is safe)**  
  
- BLM **"What If?" Suppose You Were Bullied**  
~have students fill out the activity sheet - BLM **Bystander?**
6. Show slide 13 ~ Victim Identification - **Key points: taunting/teasing**  
2 - "What If?" scenarios, **BLM Suppose You Were Teased**
7. Show slide 14 ~ You Can Help By ... - **Key points: identifying feelings, reporting, supporting friendships**  
  
- BLM **"What If?" Suppose You Were Excluded**
8. Show slide 15 ~ Could Bring in School Code of Conduct



### Suppose You Were Excluded?

Micah hangs out with Keifer and his group. Then a new student, Caleb, starts eating lunch with Keifer and the others. Caleb comes from the city and everybody thinks he's cool. But Caleb and Micah don't hit it off. Soon Keifer, Caleb, and the others are excluding Micah. They deliberately ignore him in the cafeteria and after school. They put him down to his face and behind his back. It's clear he's out of the group.

#### **Think About It**

*Suppose you were Micah. How would you feel? What would you do about the putdowns and being excluded from Keifer's group?*

*Suppose you were watching Caleb, Keifer, and the others put Micah down or ignore him. What would you do?*

### Suppose You Were Bullied?

Elizabeth is being bullied on the bus by a pair of older girls, Gayle and Tiffany. They always insist on sitting in her seat, forcing Elizabeth to give it up. At different times they have also taken her lunch and spilled juice and soda on her.

#### **Think About It**

*Suppose you were Elizabeth. How would you feel? What would you do about the bullying?*

*Suppose you were on the bus watching Gayle and Tiffany bully Elizabeth. What would you do?*

## Rumor... Rumor...

Read each situation. Circle the letter of the answer that's closest to how you think you'd respond. There are no "right" answers. Be ready to explain your response.

1. Ali and Yusef always hang out together. You see them whispering during the math quiz but you don't hear what they say. Both are good at math. Later, you hear a rumor that they cheated on the quiz. Do you believe it?

- a) No, because they're good friends and neither need help with math, so whispering together doesn't automatically mean they were sharing answers.
- b) No, because you don't know how the rumor started or who started it.
- c) Yes, because why else would they be talking during a quiz?
- d) Yes because a rumor wouldn't have started if it weren't true.

2. Kaitlyn gets picked on all the time by Barb and her friends. Kaitlyn is shy and never teases back. Today Barb is complaining that her new silver locket is missing. She thinks it broke during gym. Kaitlyn is in Barb's gym class. Later, you hear a rumor that Kaitlyn stole Barb's locket. Do you believe it?

- a) No, because Barb doesn't like Kaitlyn, so she would blame her first.
- b) No, because you don't know how the rumor started or who started it.
- c) Yes, because it makes sense that Kaitlyn would steal the locket to get back at Barb.
- d) Yes, because a rumor wouldn't have started if it weren't true.

3. Troy boasts that he pulls tons of pranks, but you've never seen any. You've always thought Troy says that to seem cool. Over the weekend someone wrecked school property. Later, you hear a rumor that Troy did the damage. Do you believe it?

- a) No, because you don't think Troy would do that.
- b) No, because you don't know how the rumor started or who started it.
- c) Yes, because Troy himself has said he pulls pranks.
- d) Yes, because a rumor wouldn't have started if it weren't true.

## **Bystander?**

Most bullies are ringleaders who have a group of followers. Usually there are also “bystanders” who watch the harassment. Think about those followers and bystanders (maybe you’ve been one). Share your ideas with classmates.

1. Why do kids hang out with bullies?
  
2. If you laugh or joke about a bully harassing others, does that make you a bully, too? Explain.
  
3. If you silently watch a bully harassing others, are you just an innocent bystander? Explain.
  
4. What might you have to give up if you choose not to go along with a bully?
  
5. What might you gain if you choose not to go along with a bully?
  
6. If you were friends with a bully and didn’t like the person’s behaviour, what could you do about it?

## Rumor as Revenge

Lance wanted to be quarterback on the football team. He practiced hard. Quinn got named quarterback instead. A week later, Lance and Quinn were working on the weight machines and someone commented that Lance's muscles looked bigger. Lance started a rumor that Quinn is on steroids- that's why he got quarterback. When Mr. Drake, the coach, hears whispered talk about Quinn's fake muscles, he wants to speak to Quinn. What can Quinn do? What should Mr. Drake do?

### Think About It

*Why do you think Lance starts the rumour?*

*Is Lance using gossip to harass Quinn?*

*What if Quinn loses his position?*

*What might happen next?*

*Think about the kids who are whispering about "Quinn's fake muscles." Are they "just gossiping?"*

*What is their role in this situation?*

## Suppose You Were Teased?

Denise has a really bad complexion. She's called "Zit-face" and "Pimple Princess" and lots of names that are much worse.

### Think About It

*Suppose you were Denise. How would you feel? What would you do about the teasing?*

*Suppose you were watching a group of kids teasing Denise. What would you do?*

## LESSON 3

### Materials

- Bullying Concepts Review CD
- projector
- BLM quote slide 16
- history of Columbine Shooting

1. Show slide 16 ~ BLM quote
2. Show slide 17 ~ Pledge of Columbine High School
  - a) might want to start with some background knowledge of the incident
  - b) show the pledge - look at what they did
  - c) create a personal pledge of how you will treat others

**Extension: instead of a list, make it a writing assignment focusing on the beginning, middle and end**

**Quote taken from Barbara Coloroso's book called  
" The bully, the bullied, and the bystander"**

**It is the deadliest combination going:**

Bullies who get what they want from their target,  
bullied kids who are afraid to tell,  
bystanders who either watch, participate, or look away,  
and adults who see the incidents as simply teasing, and a normal  
part of childhood.

## LESSON 4

### Materials

- Bullying Concepts Review CD
  - projector
  - Don't Laugh At Me book and CD (*This book is located in the intermediate kit*)
  - CD player
  - Bully Free Classroom (also in intermediate kit)
1. Show slide 18 ~ Cover of book Don't Laugh At Me
    - a) Read the book
    - b) React ~ discussion - What are you feeling?  
sad, upset for the others, disappointed because I have done this before  
Bully Free Classroom page 48 **50 Words That Describe Feelings**
    - c) Play the song  
Extension: **Music appreciation - How did the song make you feel?**  
**Art: Draw/Paint feeling to the music**
    - d) Analyze the book  
discussion - Character Identification  
How do you relate with other people/characters?  
How do you react when you see someone that is different?  
Possible reactions - What to do?

## Case Study - Diffusion of Responsibility LESSON 1

### Time Required

- 40 - 60 minutes

### Description

Students will read or role-play a case study and complete questions. This is to review terminology and launch the topic of diffusion of responsibility within a group. The rest of the class will concentrate on the loss of self within a group setting and the negative impacts. Students are encouraged to rethink negative group influences through a journal response and discussion.

### Expectations

#### Students will:

- express and respond to a range of ideas and opinions concisely, clearly, and appropriately (Language); and
- analyze situations (e.g., hitchhiking, gang violence, violence in relationships) that are potentially dangerous to personal safety (Health and Physical Education).

### Resources

- BLM Case Study ***Bullying Happens***
- BLM Diffusion of Responsibility (Response)
- background information
- BLM S.A.F.E. strategies

### Teaching/Learning Strategies

- students working individually
- students working as a whole class
- response journal
- case study
- discussion

#### 1. Discussion

- a) Introduce the unit, expectations and culminating activity.
- b) Teacher needs to review terminology and assess students through the case study.



## 2. Case Study and Discussion

Have students read or perform the script, *Bullying Happens*. Have students fill out questions individually. Through discussion, the teacher clarifies the roles people play in a bullying situation a) bully, b) bullied, c) bystander. Through the discussion teacher reviews S.A.F.E. strategies – (BLM Teacher Resource), **S-see help, A-assert yourself, F-formulate a plan, E-educate your friends**. Through the imaginative scenario, the teacher must direct discussion with the objective being that a supporter is increasing the bully's power, and that left unchecked could result in gang violence.

## 3. Discussion/Response Journal

- a) Students read about diffusion of responsibility and mob behaviour. (**BLM Diffusion of Responsibility**).
- b) Students respond to these terms by describing a scenario that relates to the information they have.

## Assessment

- questions and answers (oral)
- response journal

The teacher will use the case study, discussion, and response journal as diagnostic tools that will direct further instruction.

## Notes to Teacher

- i) Teacher may need to consult grade 6 unit for information and understanding of S.A.F.E. strategies.
- ii) Teacher may need to consult grade 7 unit for information and understanding of social exclusion / fairness and friendship. Please note attached research information that outlines that students of this age group do have the cognitive skill to step back and analyze before they act.
- iii) Students have been given a sporting example of mob behaviour. Student/teacher may bring up and relate incidences in media, e.g. McSorely N.H.L. stick assault/B.C. girl gang beating/Wamback incident (Newmarket). Continue to reinforce emotional responses and diffusion of responsibility that leads to these unfortunate incidents. Further lessons will address morality issues and strategies for dealing with potentially violent/negative group situations.

## Case Study Bullying Happens

This is an entry from a grade 6 student journal. This story details a student who no longer feels safe at school.

Dear Journal,

Every time there is a bullying incident, all people who are present play a role. (Bullies, bully supporters, victims, onlooker, supportive onlooker, intervenor, positive intervenor.)

Read through the script and distinguish which character is playing what role. Remember S.A.F.E. strategies (Seek help, Assert yourself, Formulate and Plan, Educate a friend). Decide what strategies are being used.

A group of students is sitting down to their group project in the classroom.

Sarah: "Well I hope everyone did their homework. I do not want any excuses." (Students hand papers to Sarah).

Sarah: "Okay, so it is all here. This does not look very good... Matt...do you call this handwriting? This is disgusting."

Matt: "Well, yes Sarah, it is...I take after my mom the doctor! You know doctor's handwriting - get it?"

Sarah: "I get the joke, but I don't get the writing! It's messy like your clothes and hair."

*(Matt remains silent.)*

Clara: "Sarah, it is done, give him a break!"

Sarah: "Who put you in charge? I was chosen to lead the group."

Clara: "Well then lead the group and don't bully Matt. Come up with a solution to the problem and let's move on to today's work."

Sarah: "You come up with the solution, if you're so smart."

Clara: "Fine. Here Matt I will copy this out for you...You begin today's work before Mr. Garth comes."

*Sarah rolls her eyes and looks at Dillon who has said nothing.*

**Units for Building Character**  
**Grade 8**

Sarah: "Here, we better do this activity and leave these two alone." (They move towards a reference area).

Clara: "Wow Matt! She does pick on you. I never noticed it before."

Matt: "Thanks for the help...You've got some good lines..."

Clara: "Thanks...Let's get to work."

1. List the role each character plays in this bullying incident.

Sarah	Clara	Matt	Dillon
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2. What S.A.F.E. strategies were used and who implemented them?

3. Who took away the bully's power in this situation?

4. Imagine the above scenario with different outcomes.

- a) No one says anything to Sarah.
- b) The rest of the group laughs and agrees with Sarah's comments.
- c) Matt reports to the teacher.
- d) The teacher speaks to the group and deducts marks for not cooperating as a group.
- e) Teacher tells the group to ponder the saying, "If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem."

5) What does the teacher mean?

6) Do you think the group should take responsibility for their actions?

7) Do you think the individuals would have bullied Matt, without Sarah's remarks? Why or why not?

8) Why do you think we have a tendency to do things in a group that we would not do as individuals?

## **Diffusion of Responsibility**

### **Diffusion Responsibility**

Diffusion of responsibility is what social psychologists have called group behaviour. This is when people in groups have a tendency to feel less responsible for an act of humiliation or violence. There is more than one person present so the responsibility of the act is diffused among the crowd.

People in large crowds (soccer games, hockey games, and rallies) will feel less inhibited. They may cheer loudly or yell insults. The crowd could encourage their behaviour and the behaviour could escalate. There have been many instances of the sport crowd violence, where insults have escalated to vandalism to physical violence, to riots (e.g., Rocket Richard Riots, Montreal 1962).

Social psychologists have found that people resist behaving aggressively when the target is personalized, humanized and identified with. This means you get to know someone (victim) in a different light and find something in common with them.

Think of a time when you were part of a crowd and did something to another person or group that you would not dream of doing or even attempt if you were by yourself.

Explain how you may have been “caught up in the moment”. Explain how you would now handle the situation. You may write a letter of apology explaining how your behaviour would be different given another chance.

Remind all students that they have a choice in deciding whether or not to repeat a rumor. Give your campaign some time to have an impact. Then in your groups or as a class, assess whether you think its helping. Discuss what else you might do to discourage rumors.

## **S.A.F.E. Strategies**

The following is an outline of possible strategies students could use when dealing with a bullying incident.

### **S - Seek Help**

Look for help from friends, classmates, acquaintances, allies, and adults. Ask others to help. Agree to help others who ask for help.

### **A - Assert Yourself**

Stick up for yourself with words and assertive body language. Avoid passive responses to bullying (e.g. “Oh” or silence). Avoid aggressive responses to bullying (e.g., “So what!” “You are fat too!” and “What are you going to do about it!”) Respond with calm assertive behaviour. Use “I am” statements; use humour and deflect conversation with other topics or activities.

### **F - Formulate a Plan**

Talk to family and friends. Be smart about planning your time and activities. Choose places and people that make you feel comfortable and safe from bullying. Help yourself by avoiding bullying trouble spots. Plan ways to stay safe. Report bullying to authorities.

### **E - Educate Your Friends**

Talk to family and friends. Bring bullying out into the open and call it by name. Don’t be silenced by fear of retaliation.

## LESSON 2

### Time Required

60 minutes

### Description

There are three project ideas (also an art lesson) to do individually or in pairs.

### Resources

- BLM Stop! Harassment! Campaign
  - BLM Put Yourself in Someone Else's Shoes
  - BLM Welcome to a Rumor-Free Zone
  - large feet to cut out
  - large stop signs to cut out
1. Have students choose which one they would like to work on.
  2. Follow the instructions on each project card.

#### **Stop! Harassment! Campaign**

Start a “**Stop! Harassment!**” campaign in your school that can help spread the word about how to respond to harmful gossip, taunting, bullying, and shunning.

Use a stop sign as the image for the campaign. Draw and cut out several large stop signs from mural paper.

On each sign, write **Stop! Harassment!** In bold letters, to capture kids' attention. In smaller letters, add a message against harassment.

Here are three types of messages you might include on signs:

- Warn about the kinds of behaviour that are not just innocent teasing - they're harassment.
- Identify different strategies for what to do if you are picked on.
- Challenge kids who see others being picked on to try and stop it, and not just go along.

Display the signs around the school. Target placed where kids are most likely to be picked on, such as the cafeteria and hallways.

### **Put Yourself in Someone Else's Shoes**

"Put yourself in someone else's shoes" is a figure of speech that means to put yourself in someone else's place and see things from that person's perspective.

Use the theme of shoes to send a message to peers about stopping or standing up to harassment. You might write a poem or a song to create a collage of shoes with a message. You might write about a person who is being harassed by others with the person's shoes as the narrator.

Use your imagination and have fun, but remember that the message you're sending is a serious one.

Share your finished work with classmates.

### **Welcome to a Rumor-Free Zone**

Brainstorm in a small group on how to start a campaign to make your classroom a "Rumor-Free Zone." Or, collaborate as a whole class to expand the campaign to your entire school.

Here are ideas of posters and other materials you might develop and display:

- Agree on "Rules to Discourage Rumors" that kids can follow in interacting with others.
- Illustrate "Work-it-out Skills" on ways to confront problems and resolve them openly using good communication skills.
- Remind all students that they have a choice in deciding whether or not to repeat a rumor.

Give your campaign some time to have an impact. Then in your groups or as a class, assess whether you think it's helping. Discuss what else you might do to discourage rumors.

## How to Have a Moral Conscience in Grade 8

### LESSON 1

#### Time Required

- 80 – 100 minutes

#### Description

Through group work, students will be introduced to eight mechanisms of moral disengagement. After discussing these mechanisms and gender differences that seem to occur, students will be encouraged to make suggestions as to how our school/class can generate changes in attitudes. How can we rehumanize ourselves?

#### Expectations

##### Students will:

- express and respond to a range of ideas and opinions concisely, clearly, and appropriately (Language);
- analyze situations that are potentially dangerous to personal safety (e.g., gang violence) and determine how to seek assistance (Health and Physical Education); and
- analyze situations (e.g., hitchhiking, gang violence, violence in relationships) that are potentially dangerous to personal safety (Health and Physical Education).

#### Teaching/Learning Strategies

- students working as a whole class
- students working in small groups
- brainstorming
- discussion
- direct teaching

#### Resources

- BLM Student Sheet How We Think About Hurtful Behaviour
- BLM Teacher Moral Disengagement
- BLM 8 Thinking Patterns

#### 1. Whole Class/Brainstorming

a) On board, invite answers to the question, “Why do most people not hurt others most of the time?”



**Units for Building Character**  
**Grade 8**

b) You should expect ideas relating to rules, (get in trouble, arrested) or ideas relating to social sanctions (incur other's anger, rejection) or ideas relating to moral inhibitions (feeling guilty or remorseful).

**2. Direct Teaching**

Tell students that social psychologists have found people stop behaving aggressively when the target is personalized, humanized and identified with. Moral reasoning stops us from doing something hurtful because we know we will feel bad afterwards.

**3. Whole Class/Brainstorming**

On board invite answers to the question, "Why do some people hurt others, some of the time?"

**4. Direct Teaching**

Introduce the concept that the way we think can have a big impact on the behaviours we choose. Psychologists have identified eight thinking patterns that allow people to "morally disengage" from feeling bad about doing hurtful things. Use BLM Teacher Reference Moral Disengagement and BLM Student Sheet.

**5. Small Groups**

Divide class into eight groups. Each group will analyze a different set of thinking patterns (BLM togo with the 8 different thinking patterns). Each group will answer questions and present to class.

**6. Discussion**

See debriefing suggestions in "Notes to Teacher" section.

**Assessment**

- observation
- questions and answers (oral)
- response journal

Students have been introduced to thinking patterns that allow us to "morally disengage" from our best judgment. The discussion/questions and answers are meant to highlight these thinking patterns so that students may critically look at their own thought processes and reassess their behaviours and thinking. Students are encouraged to rehumanize themselves, their school and their community in their journal responses.

**Notes to Teachers**

Throughout the class discussion the teacher should be emphasizing that "morally disengaging" occurs at the expense of others. If we really want to change our thinking patterns we have to put a value on all persons.

## Teacher Reference

### Moral Disengagement

#### How Do We Think About Hurtful Behaviour?

The following information is based on Mechanisms of Moral Disengagement (Bandura., 1996)

There are eight sets of thinking patterns that lead persons to morally disengage. When people morally disengage they bully another person and/or become involved in gang activities.

Your group has been provided with eight sets of thinking patterns.

1. As a group, decide which heading you think each set of thinking fits.
2. As a group, decide which gender statistic you think fits each set of thinking. Explain your reasoning.
3. As a group, decide who will present your set and answers to the class.

#### Moral Disengagement Thinking Patterns:

- 1) Moral Justification (girls < boys)
- 2) Euphemistic Language (girls < boys)
- 3) Advantageous Comparison (girls = boys)
- 4) Displacement of Responsibility (girls = boys)
- 5) Diffusion of Responsibility (girls = boys)
- 6) Distortion of Consequences (girls < boys)
- 7) Attribution of Blame (girls < boys)
- 8) Dehumanization (girls < boys)

Gender statistics (generated from students agreeing or disagreeing with thinking patterns)

- a) girls < boys                      b) girls = boys

## Moral Disengagement

### Student Sheet

#### How We think About Hurtful Behaviour

The following information is based on Mechanisms of Moral Disengagement (Bandura, 1996).

There are eight sets of thinking patterns that lead persons to morally disengage. When people morally disengage, they bully another person and/or become involved in gang activities.

Your group has been provided with a set of eight thinking patterns.

1. As a group decide which heading you think your set of thinking fits.
2. As a group decide which gender statistic you think fits each set of thinking; explain your reasoning. (i.e. girls < boys)
3. As a group decide who will present your set and answers to the class.

#### Moral Disengagement Thinking Patterns:

1. Diffusion of Responsibility
2. Moral Justification
3. Displacement of Responsibility
4. Dehumanization
5. Distortion of Consequences
6. Euphemistic Language
7. Advantageous Comparison
8. Attribution of Blame

Gender Statistics (Generated from students agreeing or disagreeing with thinking patterns)

e.g. a) girls < boys    or    b) girls = boys

## **Thinking Patterns**

### **Set 1**

It's alright to fight with someone to protect your friends.  
It's alright to get even with someone who bad mouths your family.  
It's alright to fight when your honour is threatened.  
It's alright to lie to keep your friends out of trouble.

### **Set 2**

Slapping and shoving boys is just a way of joking.  
To bully obnoxious classmates is a way of teaching them a lesson.  
Gossiping about someone is no big deal; it happens to everyone.  
Teasing other girls about their appearance is harmless kidding around.

### **Set 3**

Damaging school property isn't a big deal, when you consider that others are beating people.  
Stealing a little cash from a locker isn't too serious compared to those who steal a lot of money. It is okay to insult a classmate because attacking them physically is a lot worse. Compared to some illegal things people do, shoplifting is not serious.

### **Set 4**

If kids are living under bad conditions they cannot be blamed for behaving aggressively.  
If kids are not disciplined they should not be blamed for misbehaving.  
Kids shouldn't be blamed for using bad words when all their friends do it.  
Kids cannot be blamed for misbehaving if their friends pressured them into it.

### **Set 5**

A kid in a gang should not be blamed for the trouble the gang caused.  
A kid who only suggests breaking rules should not be blamed if other kids go ahead and do it.  
If a group decides to do something harmful, it is unfair to blame any kid in the group for it.  
It is unfair to blame a person who only had a small part in the harm caused by the group.

### **Set 6**

It is okay to tell small lies because they don't really do any harm.  
Kids don't mind being bullied because it shows interest in them.  
Teasing someone does not really hurt him/her.  
Sarcasm and put-downs among kids my age do not hurt anyone.

### **Set 7**

If kids fight and misbehave at school it is their teacher's fault.  
If people are careless about where they leave their things, it's their own fault if they get stolen.  
Kids who get mistreated usually do things that deserve it.  
Children are not at fault for misbehaving if their parents force them too much.

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**Set 8**

Some people deserve to be treated like animals.

It's okay to treat someone badly who behaved like a worm.

Someone who is obnoxious does not deserve to be treated like a human being.

Some people have to be treated roughly because they lack feelings that can be hurt.

## LESSON 2

### Time Required

120 minutes

### Description

This lesson will describe the difference between sympathy and empathy. Students will design a comic strip showing the 4 different ways a person being bullied will feel.

### Teaching/Learning Strategies

- students working as a whole class
- students working individually
- direct teaching

### Resources

- BLM Sympathy or Empathy
- BLM Supersensitive Superhero
- BLM comic strip paper

1. As a whole class define sympathy and empathy.
2. Have students complete the activity sheet, Sympathy or Empathy individually.
3. Come together as a whole class to share responses.
4. Art Lesson - BLM Supersensitive Superhero - Students will create a superhero figure who helps victims of harassment by getting others to feel what victims feel.

## Sympathy or Empathy

Sympathy and empathy sound alike but they are different. Feeling empathy makes us less likely to harass others and more likely to stand up to help someone who is being harassed. Try these examples to check your understanding. Write sympathy or empathy to tell what each person is feeling. Use these explanations to help you decide:

When we feel sympathy, we're sorry or sad about what happened to someone, or that person is going through a difficult time.

When we feel empathy, we can put ourselves in that person's place. We know what the person is feeling without having to be told.

1. Adrienne worked hard to create an original cookie recipe for a school contest. Then on the day of the contest, her oven wasn't working right and her cookies all burned! Joanie feels so bad for Adrienne. Joanie is not a cookie baker, but last year something similar happened with a science fair project she worked on for weeks. All that effort - then disaster! It feels so awful. *What is Joanie feeling?*

2. Carl is a great soccer player. He's also good at coaching other kids to improve their skills. Carl helped Molly and Dan, who live on his street. Both worked hard and all three got to be good friends. But Molly still didn't make the girl's soccer team. Carl is on the boy's team; Dan didn't make the cut. *What is Carl feeling for Molly and Dan? What are Molly and Dan feeling for each other?*

3. Leisha used to be overweight. The extra pounds are gone but not the memories of the teasing and taunts from other kids. She is at the mall with some friends and they are all trying on clothes. They are in front of the mirrors when another girl comes out of the dressing room. She is the size Leisha used to be. Leisha looks at her friends. Then she starts talking to the girl. She tells her that the outfit she is trying looks nice. *What is Leisha feeling?*

4. Randy's grandmother died last week. Gordon stopped by to see how Randy is doing. He feels so bad for him. He can't imagine what it would be like to lose his own grandmother. *What is Gordon feeling?*

## **Supersensitive Superhero**

Create a superhero character that helps victims of harassment by getting others to feel what victims feel. Here's one way to present your character in a comic strip format (see attached BLM).

- ☐ In the first box, show one student being harassed by another. Show other kids joining in or just standing by and silently watching the harassment
- ☐ In the second box, focus on the student being harassed. Show effects of the harassment, such as the student looking sad, being shunned by others, doing poorly in school.
- ☐ In the third box, introduce Supersensitive Superhero. Show how this character helps others put themselves in the place of the student who's being harassed.
- ☐ In the fourth box, show how understanding a victim's feelings motivates kids to stop harassing others or to stand up to harassment.

Share your cartoon with classmates. You might also send it to your school newspaper or the manager of your school web site.



(BLM Supersensitive Superhero)

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## Power: the Positive and the Negative LESSON 1

### Time Required

- 40-60 minutes

### Description

Students will explore issues of power. Through role-plays, students will demonstrate how people use their power. Students will be able to identify the power role as being positive or negative. Students should be able to understand the feeling of empowerment and powerlessness. Students will begin to explore major power differentials in modern society.

### Expectations

#### Students will:

- express and respond to a range of ideas and opinions concisely, clearly, and appropriately (Language); and
- use tone of voice and body language to clarify meaning during conversations and presentations (Language).

### Teaching/Learning Strategies

- students working as a whole class
- students working in pairs
- direct teaching
- role-playing
- brainstorming

### Resources

BLM It's About Power

#### 1. Brainstorming

Students will answer the questions, "What is power? What does the word mean to you?"

#### 2. Direct Teaching

Ask students, "Is power a good thing or a bad thing?" Follow students' lead, but emphasize that power is neither positive nor negative. It depends on how you use it.

#### 3. Working Pairs/Role-Playing

Students will be role-playing persons with power differentials (mother-child, coach-athlete, principal-student, president of a company-employee, teacher-student, captain-player, leader-follower, etc.)

Give the class about 2 minutes. The more powerful role person will stand on a chair; at one minute the pair will exchange roles and continue the conversation.

#### **4. Activity Sheet - It's About Power**

#### **5. Brainstorming**

Ask students how it felt to be in the different positions. Explore a variety of ways in which the more powerful people used their power (fairly, selfishly, rigidly).

#### **6. Journal Response**

- a) Students will reflect on a time when they abused their power. This could be a bully incident.
- b) Students will reflect on a time when someone in power used good judgment and compassion to solve a dispute or problem.
- c) Encourage students to explain their feelings in each example.

#### **Assessment**

- observation
- questions and answers (oral)
- response journal

Observe partners during the planning and delivery of the role-plays. Observe student's attitudes and behaviours after the switch. Encourage compassion and perspective. The response journal is highly personal. The intention of the response is to see if students understand the different approaches that we can all take to power.

#### **Notes to Teacher**

Caution students to use acceptable language and realistic responses during the role plays. As role-plays are presented, outline language and gestures that conveyed a positive or negative show of power. Stress that it is the intentions of people in power (self-interested vs. altruistic) that make the exchange positive or negative. Note whether there was a change in intentions when the roles were switched.

## It's About Power

There are different ways that kids get harassed by other kids, but one thing is true about all kinds of harassment - it's about power. Think about who has power and why in these situations. Share your ideas.

1. Marlena doesn't like Cate. She makes up a story that Cate is a snitch and can't be trusted. Now no one will talk to Cate or hang out with her. Cate doesn't know why kids are calling her "Snitch." She hasn't told on anyone.

*What is Marlena's power?*

*What can Cate do?*

2. Colin has a vision problem and wears very thick glasses. He's very nice but shy and quiet. Alex likes to crack jokes, says anything to anyone, and is confident and really popular. Alex never misses a chance to put Colin down in front of other kids. He makes fun of his glasses, good grades, hair, clothes, breath - anything and everything. Colin hates it when Alex's taunts make him turn red and feel totally stupid in front of everyone. Alex loves it.

*What is Alex's power?*

*What can Colin do?*

3. Jasmine is the leader of her group. Brooke is a new girl that Alana, another member, has made friends with. Alana invites Brooke to sit with their group at lunch. Jasmine ignores Brooke completely and criticizes everything Alana does and says. Alana gets the message. She stops talking to Brooke.

*What is Jasmine's power?*

*What can Alana do?*

*What can Brooke do?*

## Social Justice: How Do I Fit In? LESSON 1

### Time Required

- approximately 80 - 100 minutes

### Description

The concept of a “just society” will be presented and explored. The concept of ally will be introduced. Through group brainstorming and journal response, students will explore their role and commitment to social justice. Students will be encouraged to take small steps to reach the larger goal.

### Expectations

#### Students will:

- express and respond to a range of ideas and opinions concisely, clearly, and appropriately (Language); and
- identify support services (e.g., the school guidance department, shelters, Kids Help Phone) that assist victims of violence, and explain how to access them (Health and Physical Education).

### Teaching/Learning Strategies

- students working as a whole class
- students working in small groups
- direct teaching
- brainstorming
- response journal

### Resources

- BLM The United Nations Rights Of The Child
- BLM Just Society (student/teacher copy)
- YORKLINK 2000 - detailed information on over 600 community agencies and nonprofit organizations serving the community [www.yorklink.org](http://www.yorklink.org)

#### 1. Direct teaching

a) Using the B.L.M. introduce concepts of a Just Society. Blackline masters cover the following terminology.

- ally
- agents of oppression
- targets of oppression

b) Included in the B.L.M. file is a copy of the *United Nations Rights of the Child*. You may want to use this to help assist the discussion.

## **2. Brainstorming**

Using the blackline master, have group of students brainstorm the possible roles they could play. Also present positive role models.

## **3. Groups share findings with the class**

- a) Discussion should focus on available support services. Where can people go for help?
- b) List ideas on the board. Follow up with B.L.M. (e.g., guidance department, principal, Kid's Help Line, women's shelter, etc.)

## **4. Journal Response**

- a) Students then reflect in their journals about what a "just society" is to them.
- b) Students are to share one way in which they can contribute to a "just society".

## **Assessment**

- questions and answers (oral)
- response journal

Through questions and answers, students will express their understanding of ally, agents of oppression and targets. Through the question, "Does our government encourage social justice?", students can begin to examine the concept of "just society". Further class brainstorming should inspire students to examine their role in a "just society". Brainstorming positive allies should motivate students to a reflective journal response.

## **Notes to Teacher**

- a) Teacher may want to introduce or review *United Nations Rights of the Child* to enhance students' understanding. (optional)
- b) Students may be morally outraged with many of the injustices. Stress ally support and encourage the notion that individuals and agencies can make a difference. Students will be overwhelmed with the magnitude of the injustices; however, continue to stress that every little bit counts - writing letters, volunteering, donations, just listening, being aware...etc.

## Teacher Copy

### Just Society

In human societies, groups tend to form according to naturally occurring differences. Historical forces and legacies have created some major power differentials in modern society. More powerful groups are termed “*agents of oppression*” and less powerful groups “*targets of oppression*”, by people who study social justice. Social Justice is the study of power distribution in society. A “just society” is one in which the distribution is fair and equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Social justice stands on the foundation that all persons have rights.

List some groups that are agents of oppression and their targets in our present society.

#### AGENTS

Men

Able persons

Upper/middle class

Middle/adult

#### TARGETS

Women

Disable persons

Poor and working class

Young and elderly

There are more examples; however, let students lead list .....

a. An *ally* is someone who is not a member of a target group, but who is sensitive to the injustices faced by members of a target group, and actively supports those members.

List any target group and any possible allies now and throughout history.

#### TARGET

People of colour

Women

Disabled

#### ALLY

Underground Railroad/Quakers .....

Women's Groups/laws....harassment

Support groups/laws/funding advocates

There are more that may be connected with other subject areas.

b. Does our government encourage social justice? Explain your thinking. You may have varied opinions and example (use media coverage to help you answer this.)

Many issues will arise. Concentrate on what they hear about social issues and what agencies exist to help students who are being bullied.

#### Example:

Kids Help Line

Public Health

Drop-In Centres

(please refer to the grade 7 unit where outside agencies are explored in more detail)

The answer could be a simple or larger extension project at teacher discretion.

## **The United Nations Rights of the Child**

### **Children everywhere have the right to .....**

- affection, love and understanding;
- adequate nutrition and medical care;
- an education;
- full opportunity for play and recreation;
- a name and nationality;
- special care if handicapped;
- priority for relief in time of disaster;
- learn to be a useful member of society and to develop individual abilities;
- be brought up in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood; and
- enjoy these rights regardless of race, colour, sex, religion, national or social origin.



## Student Copy

### Just Society

In human societies, groups tend to form according to naturally occurring differences. Historical forces and legacies have created some major power differentials in modern society. More powerful groups are termed “*agents of oppression*” and less powerful groups “*targets of oppression*”, by people who study social justice. Social Justice is the study of power distribution in society. A “just society” is one in which the distribution is fair and equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Social justice stands on the foundation that all persons have rights.

1. List some groups that are agents of oppression and their targets in our present society.

#### AGENTS

#### TARGETS

2. An *ally* is someone who is not a member of a target group, but who is sensitive to the injustices faced by members of a target group, and actively supports those members. List any target group and any possible allies now and throughout history.

#### TARGET

#### ALLY

3. List any local agencies that would help/aid a target group.

4. Does our government encourage social justice? Explain your thinking. You may have varied opinions and examples.

## **“I Am Going to Make a Difference” LESSON 1**

### **Time Required**

- 80 - 100 minutes

### **Description**

Becoming a morally responsible group member is not an easy task. A person must have deep convictions and a positive self-concept. Students will assume the role of principal, parent, student or help phone operator and list their attributes and plan of action that will make a difference in dealing with negative group situations that could lead to violence.

### **Expectations**

#### **Students will:**

- express and respond to a range of ideas and opinions concisely, clearly, and appropriately (Language);
- use the specialized vocabulary appropriate to the topic in oral presentations (e.g., investigations in mathematics, demonstrations in science) (Language Arts);
- use tone of voice and body language to clarify meaning during conversations and presentations (Language); and
- identify support services (e.g., the school guidance department, shelters, Kids' Help Phone) that assist victims of violence, and explain how to access them (Health and Physical Education).

### **Teaching/Learning Strategies**

- students working as a whole class
- students working individually
- writing process
- role-playing

#### **1. Whole Class**

a) Students will be reintroduced to the culminating requirements and suggestions are outlined on the B.L.M. “I am”.

b) The speech writing will take the form of “I am”. Example 1 (student's perspective)

- I am a grade 8 student
- I am aware of thinking that can lead to bad choices
- I am well aware of power imbalances...etc

**Units for Building Character**  
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c) The speech writing will take the form of “I am”. Example 2 (principal’s perspective)

- I am a principal who wants to eradicate bullying
- I am aware of my position of power and that I can positively influence others
- I am committed to responding to bullying situations
- I am willing to empower the silent majority to action
- I am dedicated to making sure that everyone is morally engaged
- I am always willing to help you find assistance to deal with injustices
- I am a principal who believes that every child has the right to a safe and respectful environment.
- etc.

**2. Pre-writing Activity - This is Who I Am!**

**3. Individually**

- a) The rubrics will be distributed and discussed and/or clarified. Students are reminded that journal responses could guide their writing and thinking in their speech writing.
- b) Students are reminded of the use of voice and gestures to enhance and strengthen their statements.
- c) Students are reminded of specialized vocabulary throughout the subtasks.
- d) Encourage students to make assertive forceful and firm statements.

**4. Whole Class**

- a) Students will present their speech for teacher assessment.
- b) Students will orally provide feedback for each presentation.

**Assessment**

- classroom presentation
- rubric

The purpose of the task is to assess understanding of concepts and not moral development and social responsibility.

**Resources**

- BLM I Am Going to Make a Difference
- Rubric
- BLM This is Who I Am !

**Notes to Teacher**

The notion “I am” comes from a popular commercial. The “I am” theme is also a common approach to building self-esteem and positive assertiveness. This avenue was chosen to motivate students, as well as build self-confidence and direction. If presentations are successful, teachers may extend presentations to other classes or assemblies, parent meetings, etc.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Expectations for this Subtask to Assess with this Rubric:**

**Students will:**

- express and respond to a range of ideas and opinions concisely, clearly, and appropriately;
- use the specialized vocabulary appropriate to the topic in oral presentations (e.g., investigations in mathematics, demonstrations in science);
- use tone of voice and body language to clarify meaning during conversations; and
- identify support services (e.g., the school guidance department, shelters, Kids' Help Phone) that assist victims of violence, and explain how to access them.

Category/Criteria	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Communication	-communicates ideas with clarity	-communicates ideas independently with some clarity	-communicates ideas clearly and precisely independently	-communicates ideas clearly, precisely and consistently independently
Reasoning Making a Difference	-uses a few simple ideas in the speech	-uses a variety of simple and related ideas in the speech	-uses ideas of some complexity independently in the speech	-uses complete ideas in the speech
Understanding of Concepts	-with teacher assistance, shows understanding of few of the required concepts taught	-shows understanding of some of the required concepts with assistance	-shows understanding of most of the required concepts -independently identifies support services	-shows understanding of all or almost all of the required concepts
Organization of ideas Use of Support Services Creative and realistic ideas/Assertive I am statements	-organization of ideas within the speech is incomplete	-organizes in a mechanical and sequential way	-organizes ideas in the speech appropriately and logically	-organizes in the speech appropriately and in a complex way

# This Is Who I Am!

You've heard the saying, "*True friends like you for who you are.*" Describe yourself and what you want a true friend to know, like, and accept about you.

1. What's your personality? What are you like?
2. What are your best qualities?
3. What are you trying to improve about yourself?
4. What are your favourite activities and interests?
5. What do you dislike?
6. What is important to you?
7. What would you do for a friend?
8. What would you not do, even for a best friend?

## **“I Am Going to Make a Difference”**

You will be writing a speech about making a difference from the point of view of a student, parent, principal or help phone operator. The speech will take the form of assertive “I am” statements. You are expected to cover a number of concepts covered in the subtasks. Your journal responses will be a good source to review concepts and reflect on your opinions. Please review the rubric to help you with your speech writing.

**Include the following concepts:**

- moral disengagement
- power imbalances
- just society
- supporting ally
- available support services

You may include any other topics/opinions that will help you “make a difference”. Please use proper terminology as outlined in the subtasks to discuss each topic and refrain from using slang terms.

Brainstorm / Plan / Write / Revise your speech.

Practice your speech / practice voice tone and gestures.

Length: approximately 1.5 - 2 minutes and 1 page in length.