



Lesson Time: 15–25 minutes

Cyberbullying

Background

Experts agree that bullying conduct has three key characteristics: power, intent, and repetition. The person bullying has more power than his or her target. He or she decides to hurt the target through his or her words or actions. The bullying conduct happens more than once, or there is the threat it will happen again.

Cyberbullying is bullying through technology. This includes e-mail and text messages, posts on social media sites and message boards, IMs, tweets, blogs, and posts on video-sharing sites. This lesson will define cyberbullying and help students make their own choices about appropriate responses. Students will be empowered to take control and break the cycle of cyberbullying.

“Students will be **empowered to take control** and **break the cycle of cyberbullying.**”

Objectives & Outcomes

Lesson Objectives: Students will discuss the definition of cyberbullying and create posters that explain how to recognize and respond to it.

Lesson Outcomes: *Students will be able to...*

- define cyberbullying.
- list the three key characteristics of cyberbullying.
- list appropriate responses to cyberbullying scenarios.

Subject Area Connection: Language Arts

Getting Ready

Teacher Preparation: To prepare for this lesson, write the following words on the board: e-mails, texts, tweets, blogs, videos, message boards, pictures, posts, and social media sites.

Materials Required:

- chalkboard or whiteboard
- chalk or marker
- poster paper (one per group)
- markers

Key Vocabulary

cyberbullying: using technology to hurt or threaten someone.

target: a person a bully hurts.

bully: a person who intentionally hurts someone.

bystander: a witness to bullying.

Introduction and Modeling

To begin, show students the words you wrote on the board. Ask students to tell you what all of the words have in common. Students may respond that they are all forms of communication and they are all facilitated through technology. Point out that they can also all be used to cyberbully.

Invite students to share what they already know about and/or their personal experiences with cyberbullying.

Procedure

1. Explain to students that cyberbullying, like all bullying, has three key characteristics. If one of the characteristics is missing, then the conduct cannot be defined as cyberbullying.
2. Write on the board: POWER, INTENT, and REPETITION. Explain that these are the three key characteristics of bullying conduct. The person bullying has more power (physically, socially, etc.) than his or her target. The bully intends to harm his or her target. The conduct is repeated, or there is the threat that it will be repeated.
3. Give students an example of cyberbullying: Tom and Sarah created a website that ranks all the kids in their grade from the most to the least popular. They update the standings every day.
4. Ask students for suggestions of how to respond to this scenario. Discuss the suggestions and decide as a group which ones are the best options.
5. Present a second cyberbullying example: Lynn receives e-mails and posts on her social media page from the members of a group at school every day. The messages accuse Lynn of things that she knows she didn't do.
6. Ask students how they would respond to this scenario as the target (Lynn) or a bystander. Discuss the suggestions and decide as a group which ones are the best options.
7. List the best options for responding to cyberbullying on the board. Responses should include: seek help from an adult; report cyberbullying to adult family members, teachers, social media sites and your Internet Service Provider (ISP); block cyberbullies from contacting you; and refuse to forward or respond to hurtful messages.

Discussion Questions

- What is different about communicating through technology versus in person?
- Which do students feel is worse: cyberbullying or bullying face-to-face?
- If you forward a mean message, are your actions cyberbullying?
- Why has cyberbullying become so prevalent in our society?
- What role should school faculty and staff play in responding to cyberbullying?

Evaluation

Divide students into groups and have each group create a poster that includes the definition of cyberbullying (and its three key characteristics) and the best ways to respond to it. Explain that students should make their posters visually exciting to entice other students to read them and learn how to take a stand against cyberbullying.

Tips for Tailoring this Lesson

For Higher Grade Levels

- Encourage students to present their own cyberbullying scenarios to the class. As a class, decide whether or not the scenario fits the definition of cyberbullying and the best way to respond as a target or bystander.
- Discuss possible motivations for a person who bullies and what students who have engaged in cyberbullying can do to break the cycle.

For Lower Grade Levels

- Encourage students to present possible scenarios and ask for clarification as to whether or not the conduct described meets the criteria for cyberbullying.
- Discuss rules for Internet safety that students should follow such as never share personal information or passwords, never agree to meet someone you met online, etc.

Alignment to Standards and Frameworks

Common Core State Standards: College & Career Readiness

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Anchor Standards for Writing

CCRA.W.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCRA.SL.5 Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

Social and Emotional Core Competencies

Social and Emotional Core Competencies: the five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective and behavioral competencies associated with social and emotional learning as identified by CASEL. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning www.casel.org

Self-management

The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward achieving personal and academic goals.

Social awareness

The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

Responsible decision making

The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others.