



PRACTICING BEING UPSTANDERS THROUGH DRAMATIC PLAY

FILM: *THE UPSTANDERS*

Overview

This curriculum is part of a series of interactive activities associated with the documentary film, *The Upstanders*. In line with the mission of David Legacy's Foundation, the curriculum aims to support healthy habits and interactions among young people online. Partaking in these structured conversations opens up lines of communication among parents, caregivers, and their children, as well as within classrooms, about the challenges of digital life. Activities in this series are designed to combat the mental health impact of cyberbullying on young people and advocate for inclusive and compassionate peer relationships.

In this activity, viewers of *The Upstanders* get a chance to actively respond to some of the ethical dilemmas posed by the film around cyberbullying, namely how to decide to stand up to bullying and not be passive bystanders. The activity, called a "silent play," asks participants to roleplay a narrated scenario.

Disclaimer

The activities in this package are provided to support family conversations around the topics shared in *The Upstanders* screening and can be used at your discretion.

If at any time there are concerns about the well-being of a participant, please feel free to discontinue the activity.



Aims

Viewers of the film review a scenario of cyberbullying inspired by the film, *The Upstanders*; additionally, they develop an “upstander” response through dramatic play.

Materials

- ★ A sheet of chart paper or a whiteboard
- ★ “Being an Upstander: Silent Plays” handout (see below)
- ★ A staging area for a dramatic performance
- ★ A timer

Getting Started

- ★ Gather into a small group. Ask the participants: *What did you learn from the film about being an upstander to cyberbullying*? What do upstanders do when they witness someone experiencing abuse or harm?*
- ★ If needed, spend some time defining the term, “cyberbullying.” Cyberbullying, according to David’s Legacy Foundation, means bullying arising from a pattern of acts or one significant act that is done through the use of any electronic communication device, including a cellular or other type of telephone, a computer, a camera, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, a social media application, an Internet website, or any other Internet-based communication tool.
- ★ Write their responses on the chart paper or on a whiteboard. Facilitators may wish to share some tips on responding to cyberbullying. These tips are listed in a handout below.

Activities

- ★ Tell participants that a “silent play” involves participants silently acting out a narrative that is read aloud. The silent play—which can be traced back to Shakespeare—is designed to explore an environment or situation, to develop understanding, summarize,



or to experience a moment kinesthetically. These silent plays are usually very detailed and focus on using the senses and/or the body.

- ★ Read the scenario, drawn from *The Upstanders*:

Scenario:

A student at your school wears a jacket for a sports team, though they are no longer a player for the team. A team member starts a text message thread, criticizing the student for wearing the jacket. The text messages start to spread, starting a rumor about the student. Other students screenshot the rumor and forward it to the student. A friend is copied on one of the messages and wonders what to do.

- ★ Split the participants into groups of at least three, so that each person can have an active role. As a group, they should first brainstorm a response to the scenario.
- ★ Then, on the handout, they should compose a narrative for their Silent Play. The play should include the scenario and also the way that others might intervene on behalf of the victim.
- ★ Create a "Cast of Characters" and assign roles. At least one person should be the narrator in each silent play.
- ★ As a group, write one short silent play (each approximately 1-2 minutes in length).
 - Everyone must have a role
 - Write it in the third person, as a description of what the different actors are doing and saying.
- ★ Rehearse it a couple of times, just to make sure the movements are coordinated and sharp.
- ★ Perform it!



Wrapping Up

After all groups have performed their scenario, ask the participants to reflect aloud or in a journal:

- What happened in each scenario? What were the different “upstander” responses?
- Is there anything that you might have changed about the responses?
- What did you take away from the process of writing and performing the silent play?

Appendix



Being an Upstander: Silent Plays

1 / Brainstorm a response to the scenario

How might you respond to this scenario? How can you be an upstander to cyberbullying? Make a list of possible actions.

2 / Determine all of the roles in your silent play

Decide what characters will appear in your silent play. Assign the roles. Make sure you have a narrator who will read your scenario aloud as the actors mime the actions.

ROLE	ACTOR'S NAME
Narrator	



TIPS ON BEING AN UPSTANDER¹

Perhaps you have seen someone in person or online who is being bullied. You wanted to help but weren't sure how to proceed. Here are some important ideas that you can use to help make a difference.

Take Action

Don't be quiet. Speak up. Use phrases like "This is not right" or "This is completely wrong" or "This needs to stop right now." Add disapproving comments to the posts, images, or videos. Do not share the posts with others.

Do Not Encourage or Join in the Bullying

Bullies like an audience. If you are watching, or even chuckling, that makes you part of the bullying event. Stand up or move on. Encourage your friends to stand up as well. Every voice adds weight to the discussion.

Do Something

If you feel uncomfortable being directly involved, report the event to a parent, teacher, or other trusted adult who can help. Report the posts using the tools provided by most social media platforms.

Be A Friend

Reach out to the victim online or in-person. Let them know you understand what they are going through and that you are a good listener if they want to talk. Invite them to be part of a group activity or to sit with you during lunch.

Encourage the Victim To Get Help

Being the victim of cyberbullying can be very isolating. Have them talk with a trusted adult such as a parent, teacher, or school counselor. Let them know there are hotlines and online groups that can help provide support.

Report the Abuse

Make others aware of the cyberbullying, like parents or school administrators. You can report the situation with an anonymous note. If the abuse continues, you should encourage the victim to report the abuse to local law enforcement.

¹ Adapted from: David's Legacy Foundation. "Learn How to Stand Up for Others," November 16, 2018. <https://www.davidlegacy.org/2018/11/16/learn-how-to-stand-up-for-others/>