

Be a Friend  
Lend a Hand



Positive Peer Intervention

Nancy Willard, M.S., J.D.

Embrace Civility in the Digital Age

© 2012 Nancy Willard

But First a  
Prologue:

The Challenges



# Litigation

- December 2012, 3<sup>rd</sup> Circuit upheld a \$1M verdict for student-on-student harassment
  - ▶ District argued it had responded to reported incidents
  - ▶ Court concluded that responses did not stop the harm & thus school was “deliberately indifferent”



# Interventions

- Only 36% of students who are being bullied report to school
- 60% of students say school staff makes things worse when they intervene



# 3 Definitions

## ● Academic

- Intentional, imbalance of power, repeated

## ● Statutory

- ▶ Physical violence or significant interference with learning or activities

## ● Popular

- ▶ Hurtful acts



# Total Confusion

- Educators are generally taught the academic definition
- But this has no relationship to most statutory definitions
- And students are reporting based on the popular definition



# Bully Reports

- Bully reports = “black mark”
  - ▶ Discourage students from reporting
  - ▶ Characterize as “not bullying”
  - ▶ Schools that increase effectiveness of interventions should have an increase in reporting
  - ▶ Which will result in damage to reputation



# Effectiveness

- Recent well-funded, 3-year, comprehensive implementation of a Model Program (Olweus) resulted in
  - ▶ No reductions in student reports of being bullied in elementary & middle schools



# Effectiveness???

- Academic definition
- Emerging statutory approach
- Recommended bullying prevention approaches
- Investigations & interventions
- "Evidence-based"

Myths



# Myth 1

● We have a consistent understanding of what constitutes bullying & harassment

✓ Need to use consistent statutory definitions that can be objectively measured



# Myth II

● Researchers are accurately measuring bullying & harassment incident rates

✓ Measurement should be based on statutory objective definitions



# Myth III

● Educators can easily assess what situations constitute bullying or harassment

✓ Shifting to consistent objective definitions should help in assessments



# Myth IV

● If it is not bullying, then the school does not have to do anything

✓ Every hurtful situation needs to be addressed ~ even if it is not bullying or harassment



# Myth V

● Requiring schools to report bullying incidents will result in reduced bullying & limit its harmful effects

✓ Need 2 measures: bullying reports plus school climate, incidents, response



# Myth VI

● The legal standards by which schools are judged in cases of harassment are clear & consistent

✓ Assume the standard will be: interventions must effectively stop the harm



# Myth VII

● Educators have excellent insight into when they can formally respond to off-campus acts

✓ Can respond if acts have, or reasonably could, result in interference with learning or activities



# Myth VIII

- There are "evidence-based" effective bullying prevention approaches for schools to implement
  - ✓ Assess rationale & approaches
  - ✓ Innovate & evaluate



# Myth IX

● The best way to respond to statutory requirements & threat of litigation is to suspend identified "bullies"

✓ Shape interventions to increase resiliency, remorse, remediation & restoration



# Myth X

- Conflict resolution & peer mediation are not effective approaches to address bullying
  - ✓ Informal & formal positive peer interventions are essential

New Vision



# Assessment

## ● School-based ~ measuring

- ▶ School climate
- ▶ Negative incidents
- ▶ Reporting & effectiveness of interventions
- ▶ Positive peer interventions



# Management

## ● Positive classroom & school management practices

- ▶ Positive expectations
- ▶ Community building
- ▶ Intrinsic motivation
  - Not extrinsic rewards ~ they do not lead to intrinsic motivation



# Social Emotional

## ● Comprehensive plan for SEL

- ▶ School “community” approach
- ▶ Direct instruction
- ▶ Integrated instruction
  - Language arts & social sciences
- ▶ Informal opportunities
  - Class meetings & advisories



# Student Leadership

- Bullying is socially motivated  
~ so peers largely control its occurrence
  - ▶ Student leadership in planning
    - Students tell adults what needs to be done
  - ▶ Increase positive peer interventions
  - ▶ Use peer-based interventions



# Investigations

## ● Focus on factors to support remediation & restoration

- ▶ Degree of culpability of all participants
- ▶ Severity of distress
- ▶ Interference with learning or activities
- ▶ Pervasiveness, persistence, powerlessness



# Investigations

## ● Protected class issues

- ▶ Status & motivation
- ▶ General hostile environment

## ● Motivations of aggressor

- ▶ Motivated or maligned

## ● Challenges faced by target



# Interventions

- The 4 "R's"
- Resiliency for target
- Remorse & Remediation by aggressor
- Restoration of target & community



# Evaluation

- Conduct post-incident evaluation
  - ▶ Students, parents, staff
- Student reporting should be expected to increase as school improves intervention effectiveness

# Positive Peer Intervention



# State of the Research on Positive Peer Intervention





*When  
students  
witness  
bullying,  
they have  
a choice*

*They could be a ...*



● Hurtful  
Participant



● Passive  
Observer



● Helpful  
ALLY

# Helpful Allies



## ● Reach Out

- ▶ Reach out to be kind



## ● Say, "Stop"

- ▶ Tell the one being hurtful to stop



## ● Report Concerns

- ▶ Tell an adult who can help

# The Challenge



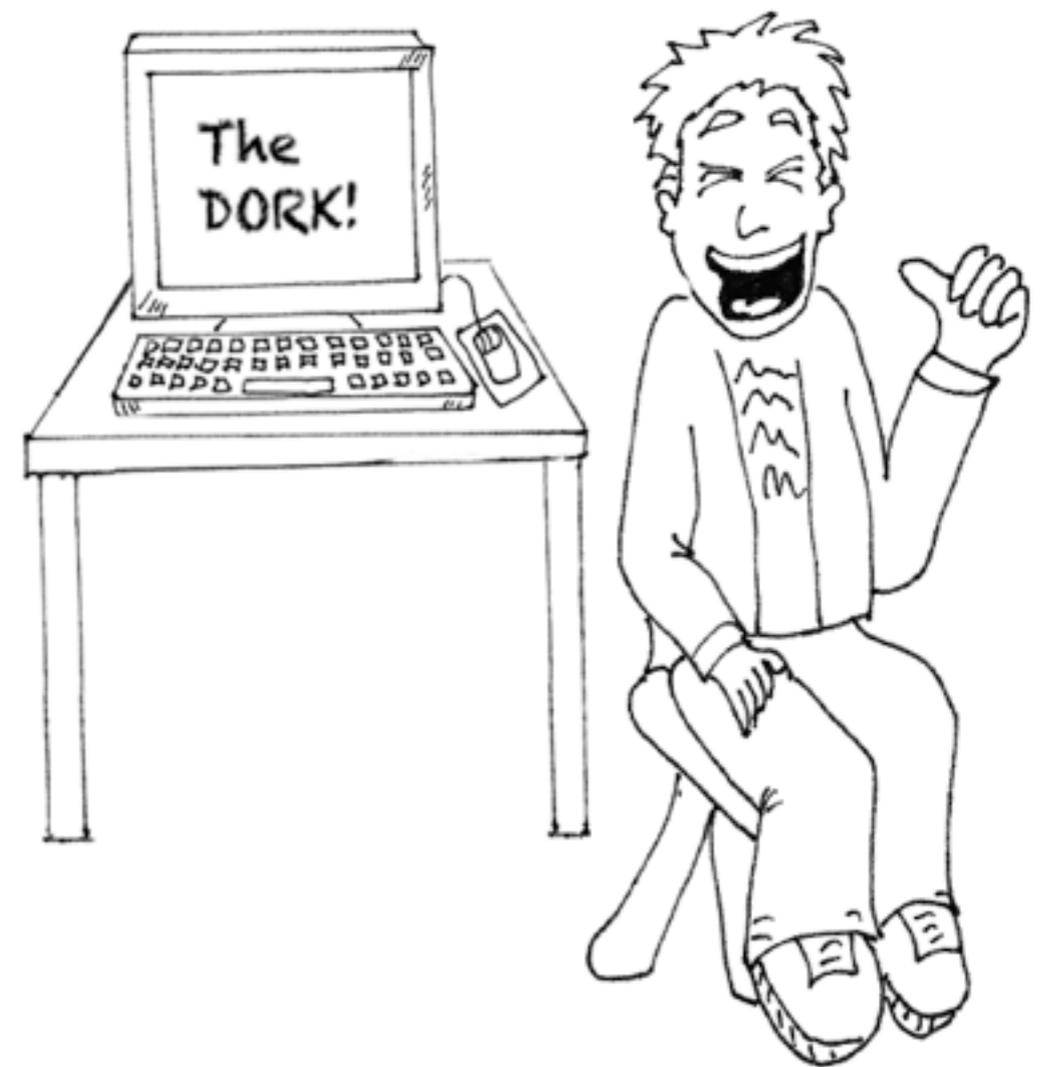


## ● Most bullying is socially motivated

- ▶ To attract attention & gain power
- ▶ Targets often have lower social status & are perceived as “different”



- Public cyberbullying appears to be highly socially motivated

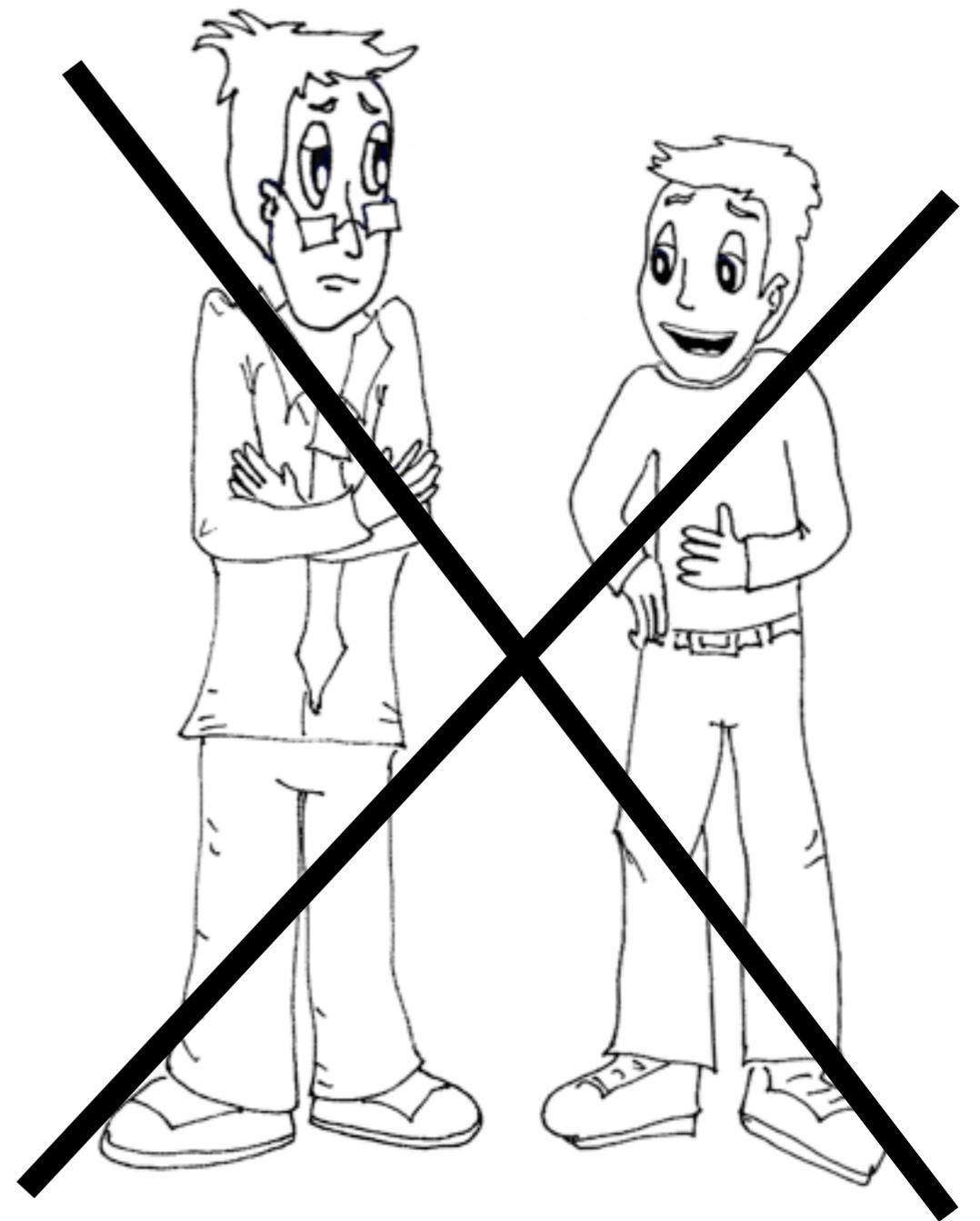




- Many students think those who bully are "cool"
- But they are not well-liked



- Most bullying does not occur in the presence of adults
- Often students do not report



- Most students think bullying is wrong
- Most feel sorry for the target
- Many express a desire or intent to help



● When students help, they can be very effective

- ▶ Can effectively stop hurtful behavior
- ▶ Targets with helpful friends are less distressed



● But when bullying occurs, far fewer students step in to help



# Intervention Factors



# *Support Intervention*

- Noting a hurtful situation
- Interpreting it correctly
- Feeling personally responsible
- Having sufficient personal power
- Having effective skills
- A supportive social environment

# Holocaust Rescuers

- Acceptance of differences
- Belief that individual action mattered
- Loving altruistic homes
- Strong self-confidence
- A support network

# Discourage Factors

## ● Diffusion of responsibility

- ▶ “Someone else is responsible”

## ● Audience inhibition

- ▶ “I could embarrass myself”

## ● Social influence

- ▶ “No one else is doing anything”

“Bystander effect”

# ● Spin It

- ◆ “They were joking”
- ◆ “Someone needed to say it”



*Reconstrue  
Conduct*

# ● Blame Others

- ◆ “Someone else should have done something”
- ◆ “I need to MYOB”



Someone else started it

*Diffusion of Responsibility*



She's just  
overreacting

## ● Deny the Harm

- ◆ "It wasn't that bad"
- ◆ "They're overreacting"

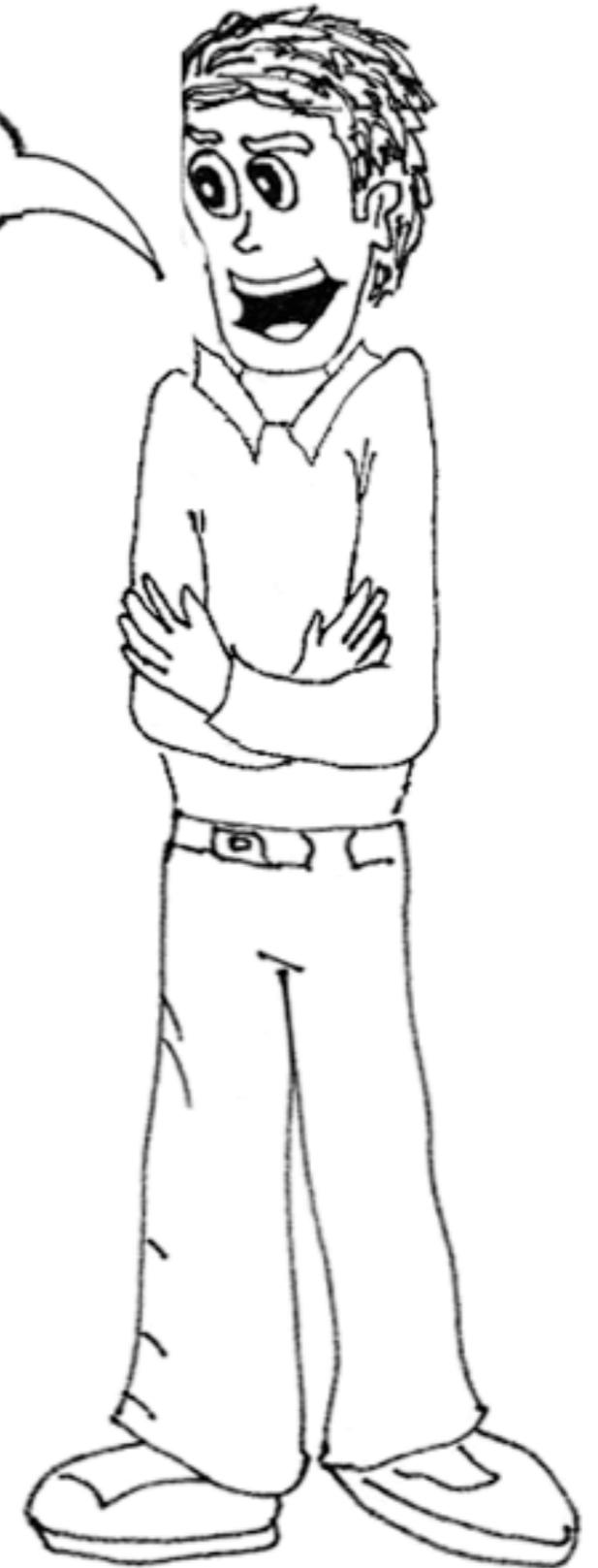
*Disregard  
Harmful  
Consequences*

He deserved it

## Put Down

- ◆ “He is just too weird”
- ◆ “She deserved it”

*Dehumanize  
the Victim*



# Personal Factors



# Motivation

- Personal responsibility for the well-being of others
- Accepting of differences
- Affective empathy
- Personal connection

Strategy to Address

*Social  
Emotional  
Learning*

# Personal Power (Social Status)

- If Witness is not as powerful as higher social status Aggressor
  - ▶ Risk: Embarrassment & retaliation
- If Witness becomes associated with lower social status Target
  - ▶ Risk: Embarrassment

# Strategy to Address

Influence Witnesses with higher social status to be Helpful Allies, by increasing skills & motivation

# Strategy to Address

Lower social power  
barrier with a Positive  
Norms Approach to reduce  
social power of Aggressors  
& increase social power of  
Helpful Allies

# Positive Norms Approach

*Use local survey data to  
help students understand  
actual norms*

# Social Self-Efficacy

Skills  
+  
Confidence

- A combination of skills and social status/power

# Strategy to Address

*Provide adult & peer insight into strategies to reduce risks of embarrassment or failure*

- ◆ *Private strategies*
- ◆ *Safer public strategies*

# Social Factors



# Friendships

## ● With target

- ▶ Will help target

## ● With aggressor

- ▶ Will support aggressor

## ● With both

- ▶ Will mediate or stay out of it

## ● With neither

- ▶ Personal factors are controlling

# Strategy to Address

*Encourage friends  
to tell hurtful  
friends to stop*

# Perceived Peer Norms

- What students think other students think about those who ...
  - ▶ Are hurtful
  - ▶ Support those being hurtful
  - ▶ Step in to help

**Students often behave in accord with what they perceive peer norms to be**

**When those norms discourage peer aggression & support positive peer intervention, the number of students who are willing to act in a positive manner increases**

# Strategy to Address

*Use Student Leaders  
to share Positive  
Norms data with  
their peers*

# *School Culture*

## ● Culture of Acceptance

- ▶ “We don’t do that here”
- ▶ “We celebrate differences”
- ▶ Staff modeling of respect & responsiveness

# *School Culture*

## ● Shared Personal Responsibility

- ▶ “Everyone is responsible for stopping bullying”

# School Culture

## ● Conflicts with Rules & Expectations

- ▶ “No MYOB if someone is being hurt”
- ▶ “Stop to help - don’t worry about being tardy”

# School Culture

## ● Effectiveness of Interventions

- ▶ If interventions are not effective, students will not report concerns

# Strategy to Address

*Regularly assess school climate issues related to conditions to support positive peer intervention*

# Approach



**Increase  
effective  
skills**

**Change  
students'  
perception of  
peer norms!**

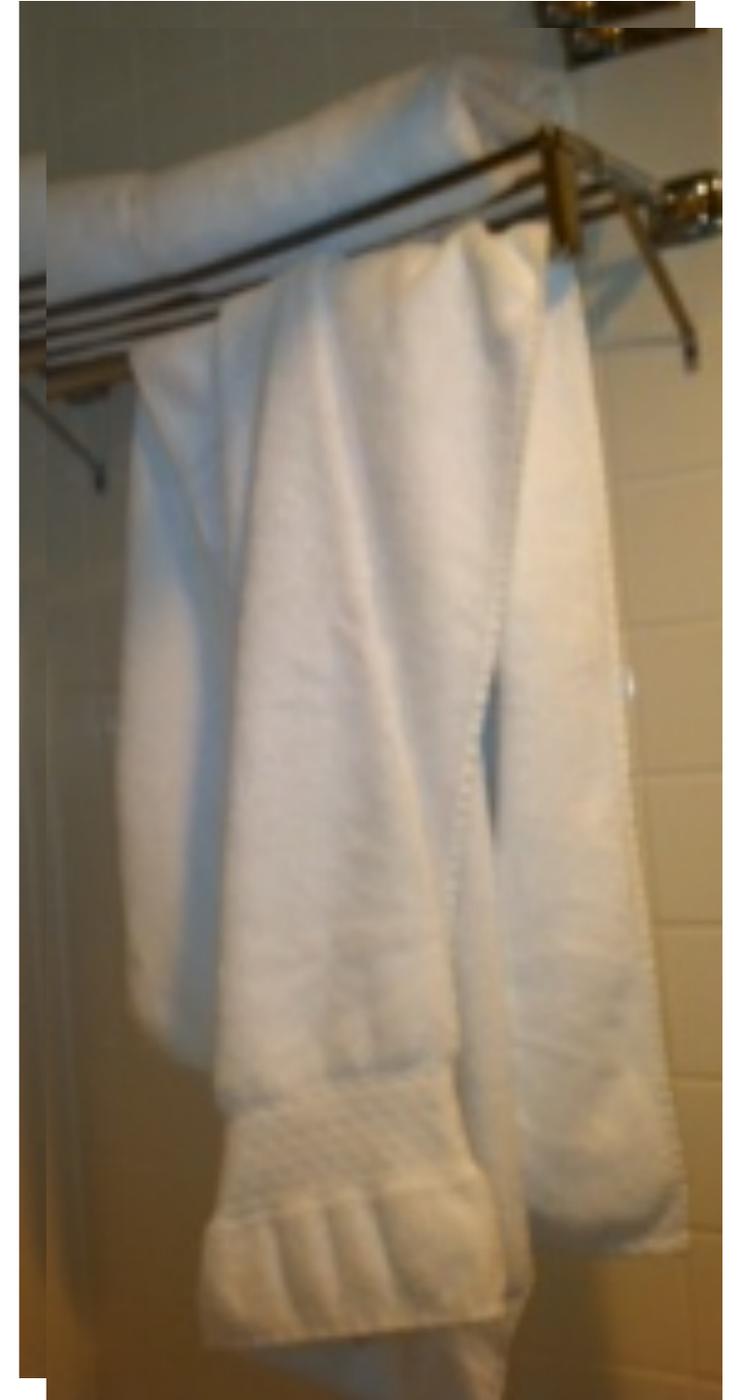
# Evidence Grounded Strategies

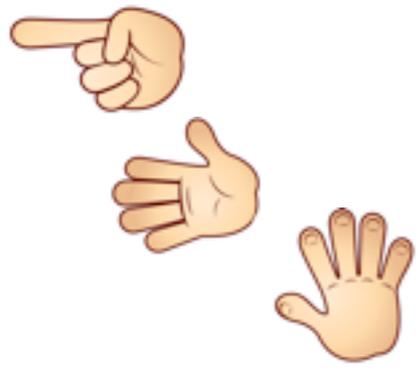


# Hanging Up Towels

## ● Study on influence

- ▶ In a hotel
- ▶ Measured towel hanging
- ▶ Placed sign in room: “75% of people hung up their towels”
- ▶ Rate of towel hanging went way up





# Social Norms

## Youth Health and Safety Project

Perkins and Craig bullying intervention

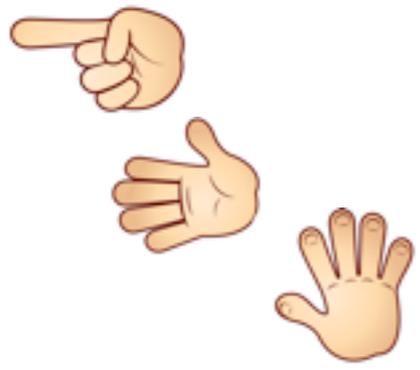
### ● Strategies

- ▶ Survey students about perspectives of bullying
- ▶ Demonstrate positive norms with posters

# Strength in Numbers

80% of Crystal Lake 6 - 8<sup>th</sup> grade students say students should NOT tease in a mean way, call others hurtful names, or spread unkind stories about other students

Source: Results are from an October 2006 survey of grades 6-8 at Crystal Lake Academy with 86% of students participating.



# Application

- Use local survey data to reinforce positive norms
  - ▶ High regard for those who do intervene
  - ▶ Low regard for those who are hurtful
  - ▶ Low regard for those who support those who are hurtful
  - ▶ Majority of witnesses are not supporters



# Student Leadership

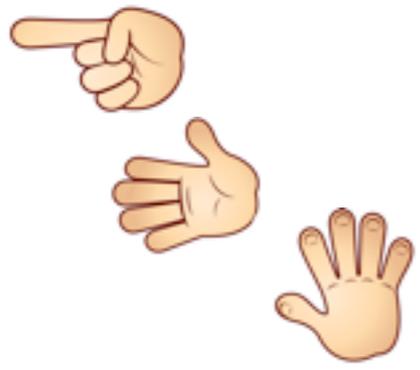
## Sources of Strength

Youth Suicide Prevention Program

### ● Strategies

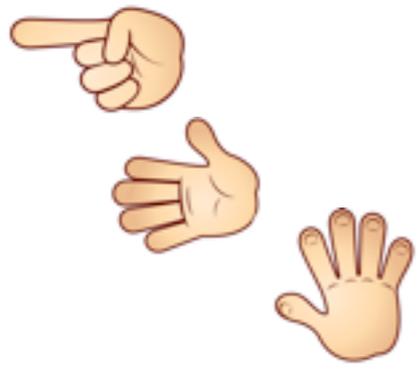
- ▶ Uses peer leaders to change norms around codes of silence and help seeking





# Application

- Use Student Leadership Team to deliver messages
  - ▶ Class instruction, PSAs & other activities
  - ▶ Ensure diverse student team
  - ▶ Use older students to teach younger students
  - ▶ Student presentation strategies



# SKILL DEVELOPMENT

## Know Your Power

University of New Hampshire project to encourage bystanders to intervene in situations of dating violence

### 🎯 Strategies

- ▶ In class instruction
- ▶ Posters about effective strategies



I just saw Joe take Anna into his room. She's so wasted.

Joe got her drunk when they were playing Beirut.

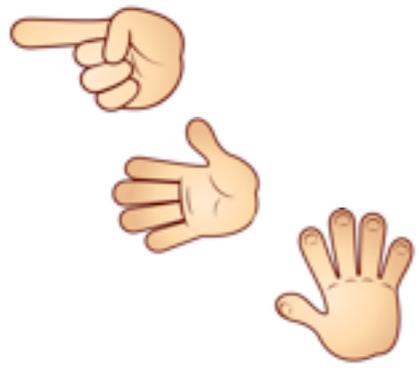
Let's check on her. If he does something when she's drunk, that's rape.

Friends watch out for one another...  
Especially when there is alcohol involved.

**Know Your Power**  
**Step In, Speak Up**  
You Can Make A Difference™

[www.Know-Your-Power.org](http://www.Know-Your-Power.org)

© 2008 National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. All rights reserved. This material is for informational purposes only and does not constitute an offer of insurance or any other financial product. For more information, please contact your insurance agent or the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism at 1-800-426-2646.



# Application

## ● Ensure strategies are safe

- ▶ Public ~ use Power of 3
- ▶ Private strategies that are safer

## ● Reinforce their strategies

- ▶ Them telling them what they think
- ▶ Student-led instruction & student created posters



# Skill Development

## Expect Respect

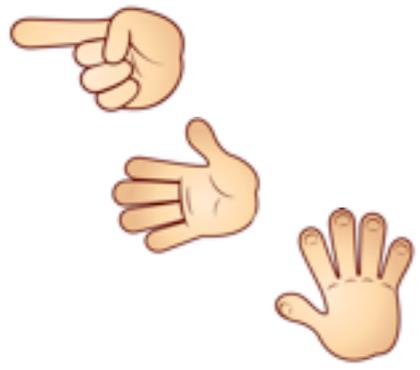
Positive Behavior and Interventions Support

### ● Strategies

- ▶ Teaches about attention-getting
- ▶ If targeted briefly say “stop” ~ then walk away
- ▶ If told to stop ~ walk away and reflect

EXPECT  
RESPECT

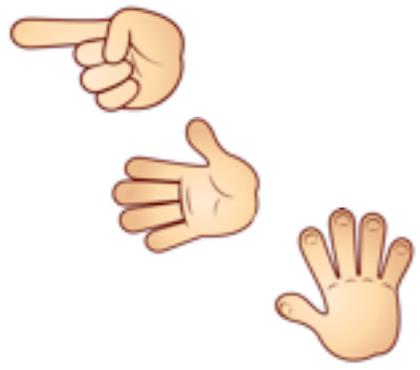




# Application

## 🌐 Incorporate

- ▶ Insight into attention-getting goals
- ▶ Witnesses say “stop” & help target walk away
- ▶ Use Power of 3 to have greater status
- ▶ Also say “stop” online
- ▶ What to do if someone says “stop”



# Skill Development

## Restorative Practices

International Institute for Restorative Practices

### ● Strategy

- ▶ Suggest a series of questions for peers to ask friends who have been hurtful
- ▶ Intent of leading to a restorative conclusion

What happened?

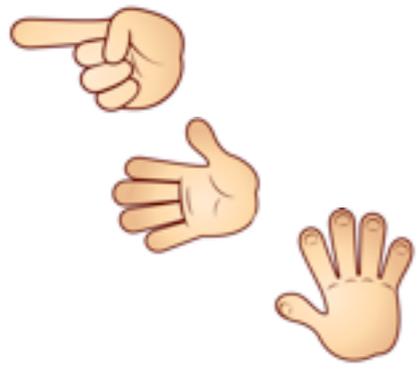
What were you thinking about at the time?

What have your thoughts been since?

Who has been affected by what you did?

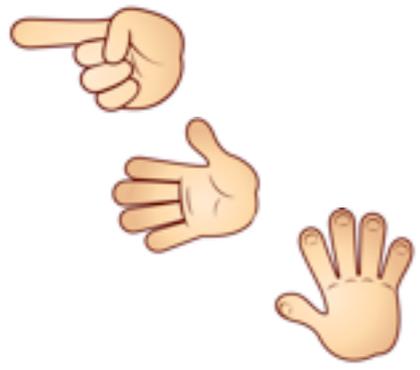
In what way have they been affected?

**What do you think needs to happen next?**



# Application

- Focus on friends telling friends to stop
  - ▶ Mechanisms for disengagement
  - ▶ Influences for positive behavior
  - ▶ Focus on remedying harm



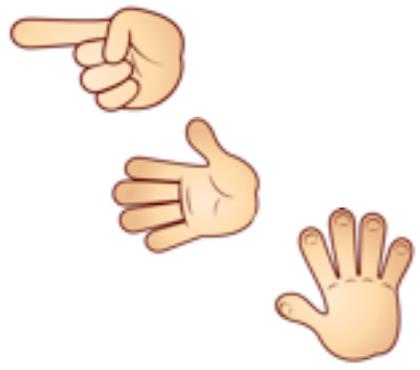
# Skill Development

## Psychology of Influence

Cialdini ~ focus on influence for marketing

### 🎯 Insight

- ▶ Identified five major influences on behavior



# Application

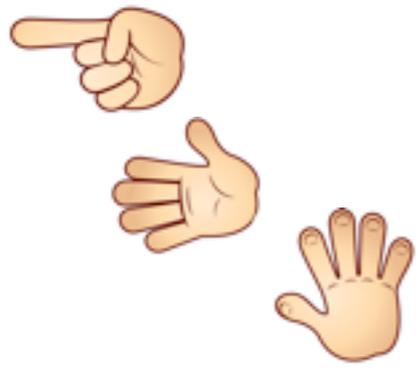
## ● Incorporate influences

### ▶ Reciprocity

- Students privately ask “How would you feel if someone did that to you?”

### ▶ Commitment

- Students complete a Statement of Personal Values



# Application

- ▶ Social proof
  - Reinforce positive social norms
- ▶ Liking
  - Student leaders talking to students
- ▶ Authority
  - Students privately ask “What would your parents think if they knew you did this?”
  - School and parents reinforce Helpful Allies

Example



# Be a Friend Lend a Hand



Reach  
Out



Say,  
"Stop"



Report  
Concerns

<http://embracecivility.org>

# Survey your students

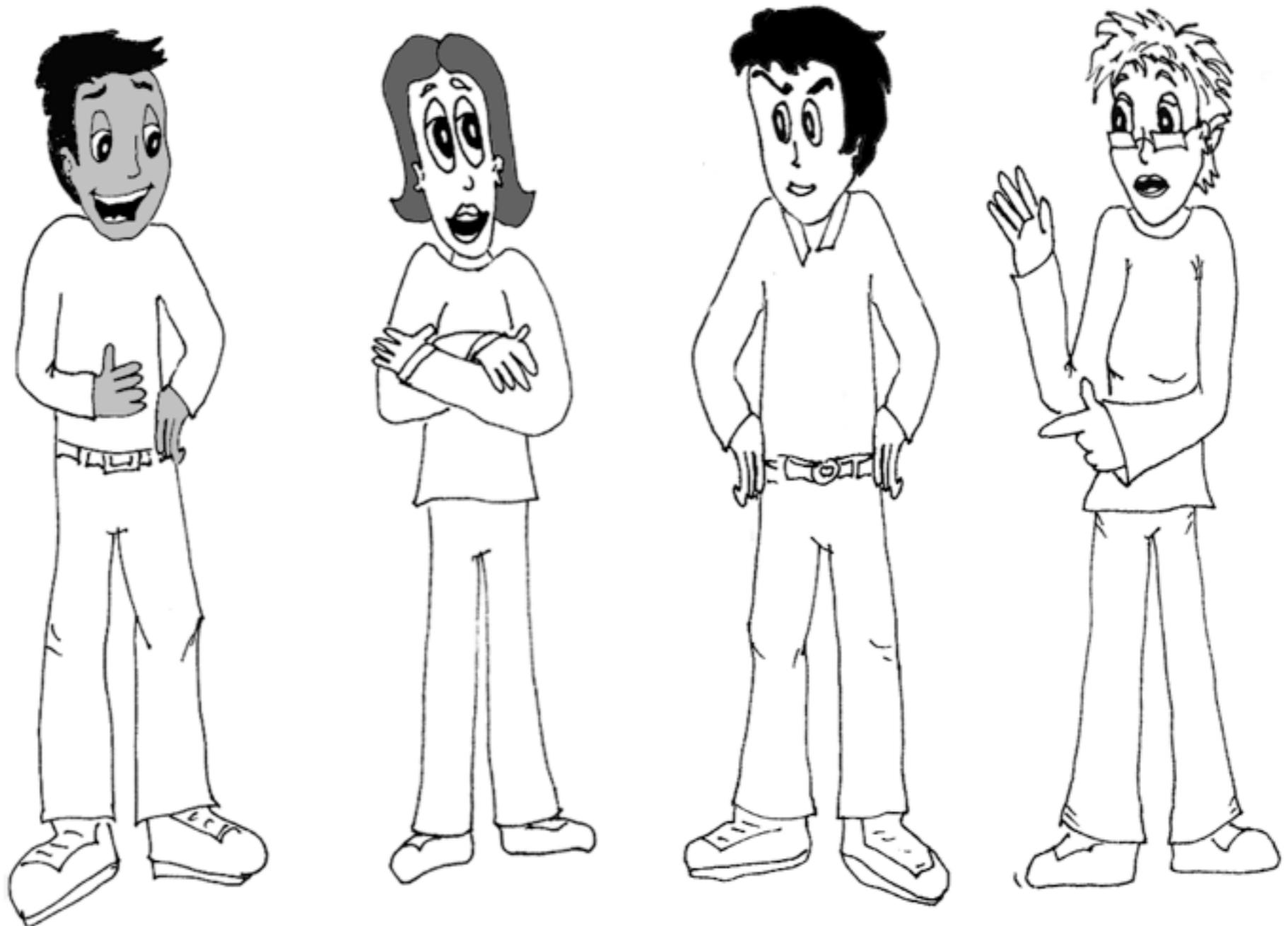
**What is your reaction if you see that someone is bullying another student?**

- I really do not like to see this
- The one being bullied often deserves it
- It's no big deal
- This can be fun to watch
- The one bullying is popular and cool.

**What words would you use to describe a person who tries to help when he or she sees someone bullying another student?**

27 Question online  
survey ~ Google Forms

# Establish a Student Leadership Team





83% of (school name) students  
really do NOT like to see people  
bullying others



How do (school name) students describe someone who tries to help if a student is hurting another?

Admire Brave Caring Considerate

Doing the Right Friend Helping Hand Hero Heroic

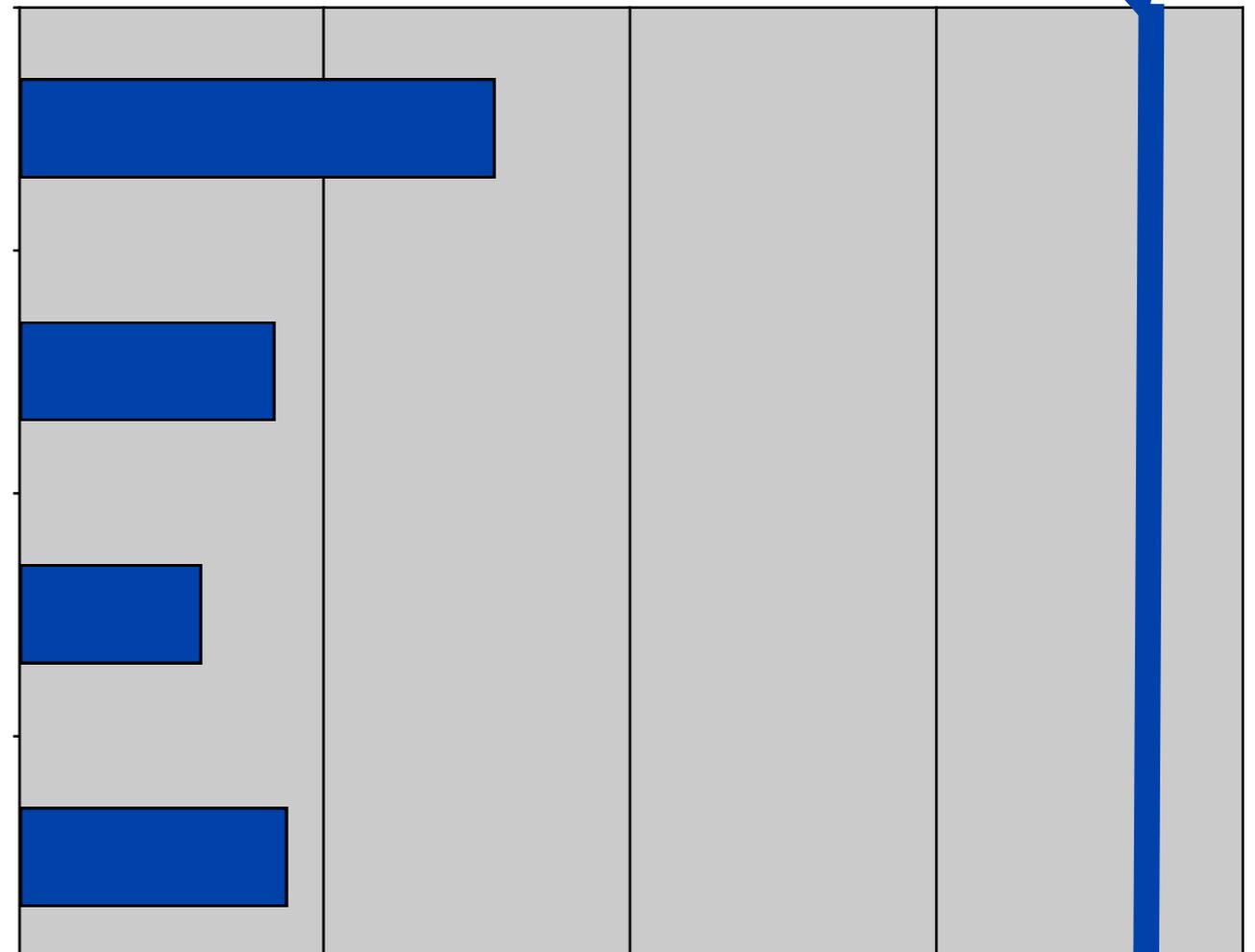
Kind Loving Nice Respectful

Responsible Stand Strong

*When someone was bullying you, what did other students do?*

Said it is important to try to help

- Reached out to be kind to me
- Publicly said "Stop"
- Privately told the person to stop
- Told an adult who could help



## *What stopped you from helping?*



- ▶ I did not know what I could do
- ▶ Others thought the one who was bullying was "cool"
- ▶ It was not my business
- ▶ School staff should have responded
- ▶ The one who was bullying could have retaliated

How you can ...

Be a Friend  
Lend a Hand



Reach  
Out



Say,  
"Stop"



Report  
Concerns

# Reach Out



The  
BEST  
Thing  
You  
Can  
Do!!!





# Reach Out

Just talk  
to them

Sit next  
to them  
at lunch

What  
You  
Said  
You  
Can  
Do

Spend time  
with them

Ask them to  
hang out  
after school

Text them

Give  
them  
a hug

Talk to  
them  
privately

Hang out  
with them

Be their  
partner



# Reach Out

“Hey, are you okay?”

“I didn't like what happened”

“Let's get help”

“Just believe in who you are”

“It'll be alright”

“Don't react, it's what she wants you to do”

“I'm on your side”

“Hey, don't listen to them”

What  
You  
Said  
You  
Can  
Say



# Say "Stop"

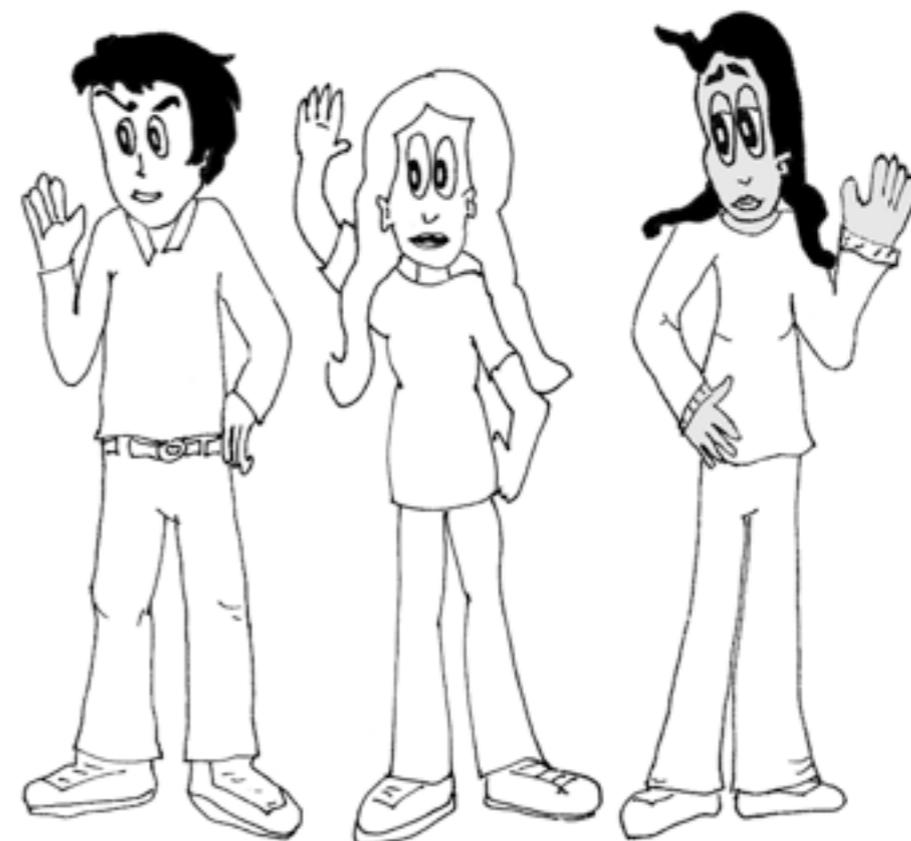


- \* *Keep yourself safe*
- \* *Don't get into an argument*
- \* *Don't retaliate*
- \* *Be a friend, by helping your friend stop!*



# Say "Stop" Publicly

*There is safety  
in numbers*



## ● Use the Power of 3

- ◆ Find 2 other people who do not like this
- ◆ Each of you say or post "Stop"
- ◆ Then walk away or stop posting
- ◆ Help the one being hurt leave



“Not  
okay”

Say “Stop”

“Cut it out”

“How would  
you feel?”

“Don’t  
do that”

“That  
isn’t  
nice”

“It’s  
NOT  
cool”

“I don’t  
like that”

“Really?”

What  
You  
Said  
You  
Can  
Say

“Stop, we don’t  
do that here”

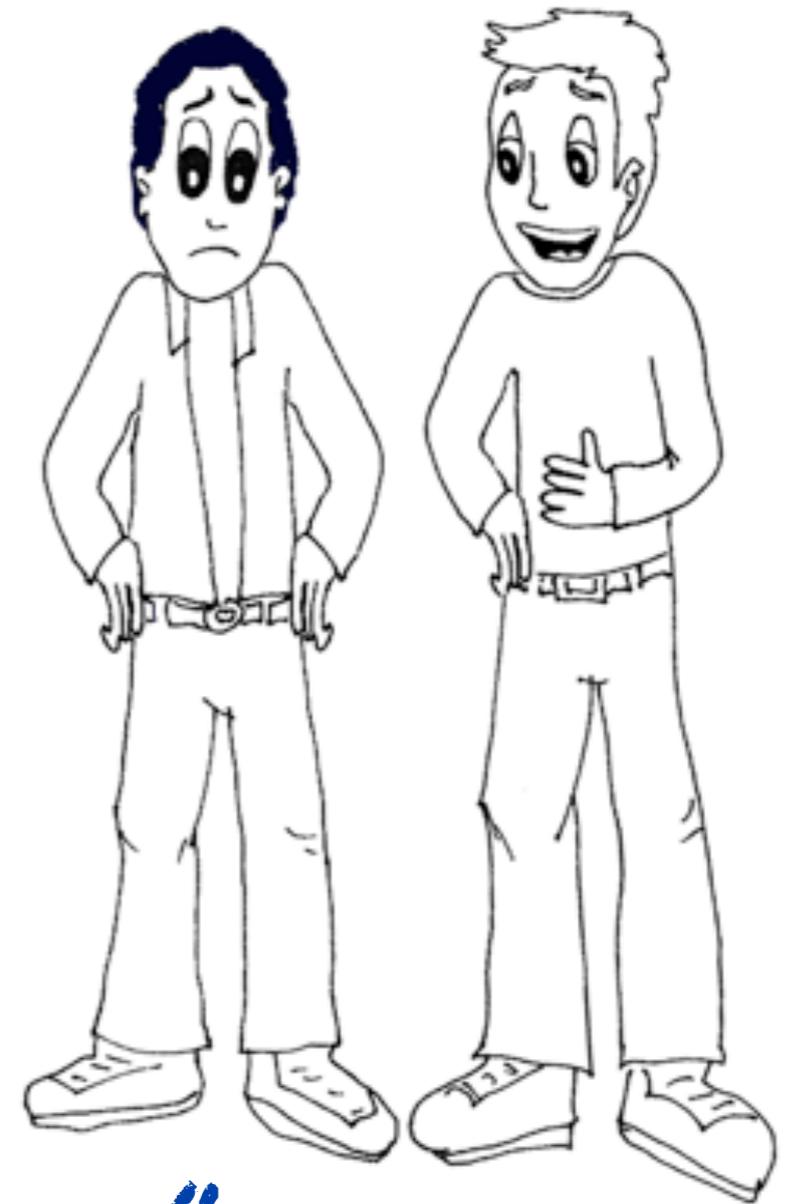
“What did he do  
to deserve this?”



# Say "Stop" Privately

## ● Ask these questions:

- ◆ What were you thinking?
- ◆ How would you feel if someone did that to you?
- ◆ What will others think?



## ● Challenge their "excuses"

## ● Focus on making things right



# If someone says "stop"

## Do this:

- ◆ Take a deep breath
- ◆ Get control of yourself
- ◆ Walk away or get offline
- ◆ Think about what you did
- ◆ **Take steps to make things right**





# Report Concerns

## • When to Report Concerns

- ◆ If any student has stated ~ or you think ~ he or she might hurt someone or him or herself
- ◆ If a fight could break out or a group of students are being hurtful
- ◆ If anyone is really sad, angry, or out of control
- ◆ If someone has tried to get this to stop and it has not worked
- ◆ If it is not safe to do something by yourself

# Statement of Personal Values

- ◆ What are your personal values about helping someone who is being bullied or hurt?
- ◆ Why do you think this way?
- ◆ How would you tell a friend to stop being hurtful?
- ◆ What concerns might stop you from helping?
- ◆ How can you deal with these concerns?
- ◆ What could you say to someone who helps?

# *Other Activities*

- ▶ Student-posters focusing on positive norms and effective strategies
- ▶ Regular PSAs
- ▶ “Do Kind Things” days and “Be a Friend” table
- ▶ Identify and reinforce Helpful Allies
- ▶ Follow-up survey
- ▶ Collaborate on Facebook with other schools

# Be a Friend Lend a Hand



Reach  
Out



Say,  
"Stop"



Report  
Concerns

<http://embracecivility.org>