



Bullying Intervention: What to Do When You Witness Bullying

When we intervene, it is key to keep in mind that our number one priority is to take care of the target of the bullying. It is important to actually use the word “stop” when intervening.

Step 1: Stop the bullying

- + Use the word “stop”.

Step 2: Name the bullying behavior

- + “What I just saw was bullying and is not tolerated in this school.”
- + “I overheard you calling him gay. Using that word as a put-down is not okay.”

Step 3: Support the student who has been bullied. Then, remove them from the scene.

- + It is important to make sure the targeted student is okay.
- + Then send them either back to class or to a counselor before speaking to those that were involved in bullying.
- + It is also important to let them know that you will be checking in with them later. This is key to building trust and showing that you care.

Step 4: Engage the bystanders

- + If they were involved:
“Why were you laughing?”
“Why did you think it was okay to act this way?”
- + If they were trying to help the student that was being bullied, show praise and appreciation for their support.

Step 5: Address the student that was bullying

- + Either impose immediate consequences or let them know consequences will occur and the behavior will not be tolerated.
- + This is not a time to debate or ask questions. This is a time to let them know the behavior was not okay, impose consequences, or refer to someone that can. A more in depth discussion should happen at a later time when emotions are not high.

Step 6: Follow up with student being bullied

- + Best if done the same day.
- + Get details so you can determine appropriate consequences to the student who was bullying.
- + Reinforce that they deserve to be treated respectfully.
- + Remind them of the importance of telling an adult when bullying occurs.

REMINDERS AND TIPS:

- + First priority is to make sure the student being bullied feels supported.
- + Engage bystanders by asking questions. They should feel accountable.
- + Always talk to the bullied student first to determine next steps and consequences.
- + Don't engage in too much discussion with the student that bullied at the time of the incident. Be objective (state what you saw) and let them know it can be discussed more thoroughly at a later time.

Credit: Cheryl Greene M.Ed., 2012. Adapted from Olweus Bullying Prevention Program