

BULLYING: RECOGNIZING A PROBLEM

PART 1 DIRECTIONS:

In order to stand up and help stop bullying and other harmful situations, it's important to be able to recognize when they are occurring. Sometimes, as with a physical attack, bullying is obvious. Other times bullying may look a lot like friendly joking around. Read the scenarios below. Then discuss with a partner whether or not you think this is a situation in which a student is being harmed. Which details help you recognize a harmful situation? (Write these down.)

Scenario A

You are in the cafeteria when you see Erica walking in with a full tray of food. It's busy in the cafeteria, and there aren't many free chairs left. She starts moving toward a table full of chatting girls. There is a backpack on the only open chair. You see that when Erica asks if the chair is free, the other girls keep chatting and ignore her.

Scenario B

A group of three boys are gathered on the playground before school starts. You notice they are whispering, and one is holding what looks like a large fake spider. They approach another boy named Sam who is standing alone. You see that while two of the boys start talking to Sam, the other boy quietly slips the spider into Sam's backpack. When everyone is in class later, Sam opens his backpack and spots the spider. He screams and drops his bag. The three boys burst out laughing.

Scenario C

Every day during a free period, Chloe, who is one of the quieter students in school, goes to the gym and practices a dance routine. Over the course of several days, a couple of girls follow Chloe and secretly take videos of her dancing. They send messages to you and other students with links to the videos online. The messages include unkind comments about Chloe's dancing.

Scenario D

Daniel had always been outgoing, but in the last year you notice that people would make mean comments anytime he posted photos online. Recently, you observe that he is not hanging out with his friends. He has dropped out of many activities, and his behavior has changed. He seems angry. You've also spotted him sitting alone on the school grounds drinking from a thermos when he should be in class.

PART 2 DIRECTIONS:

Choose one of the scenarios above that you think involves a child or teen who is being bullied or is struggling with drugs or alcohol. Think about how you can stand up for the person in the harmful situation. Write a paragraph describing the steps you might take to try to stop or prevent the situation. Explain at least three specific actions you might take. Refer to the action tips in the box to the right as you write your paragraph.

TAKE NOTICE

- Is a fellow student being left out or treated unkindly, either in person or online?
- Has your schoolmate's behavior suddenly changed, or does he or she seem sad or angry all the time? These may be signs that he or she is experiencing depression, anxiety, or substance use.



TAKE ACTION

- Do something. Doing nothing can make a situation worse.
- Report cyberbullying instead of passing on hurtful messages.
- If possible, try to help a child or teen who is being bullied find a safe way out of a situation or situations.
- Get involved with programs in your school to help prevent bullying.



SPEAK UP

- If you see or read something that makes you feel uncomfortable, tell a parent, teacher, or other trusted adult.
- Remember that adults don't always know everything that is happening.



BE KIND

- Engage and include one of your peers who might be feeling left out, such as by asking her or him to sit with you at lunch or on the bus. Or extend an invite to join in on an activity after school.
- Pay compliments to fellow students.



BE AWARE

- If you see signs that a child or teen is suffering from depression or anxiety, or that he or she has begun using drugs or alcohol, talk to a trusted adult about your concerns.

