**Teen Leadership Corp 2012**

This brief guide can be used to generate a student discussion about bullying, cyber-bullying, and any defamation of character that takes place in an out of school. The guide also can be used at any time as a companion to anti-bullying curricula, activities or programs—during a student advisory period, or following a school assembly on the topic.

**Grade level**: 11th/12th

**Student learning objective**

Consider the impact of bullying on the school as a whole, as well as the impact on the bullied student who does not receive the help he or she needs. Learn about safe ways to help a student who has been mistreated. Talk openly about whether the climate of your school supports bullying prevention. Students will use the leadership models in class to select a student to moderate this project of creating a school-wide website that includes: web design, data analysis, video, help center, testimonials, mission statement, and a pledge. This assessment will be assessed by the team leaders along with being assessed by the teacher.

**IMPORTANT: Bullying prevention should be an ongoing, comprehensive, school-wide effort. This discussion guide may be viewed as one small piece of that larger effort. Be aware that bullying is a highly charged topic; as such, student discussion may provoke emotional reactions or self-disclosures, in addition to negative opinions regarding how particular students experience your school’s climate. Before using this guide in your classroom:**

* Ensure that you have administrator support. Have a plan in place to address students’ expressed concerns about how the school currently handles bullying incidents.
* Prepare to manage self-disclosure and make referrals. Remind students that for the purpose of confidentiality during the discussion, it is better not to refer to either themselves or other students by name. Consider having the school counselor co-facilitate the discussion with you, and at the very least, consult him/her for advice beforehand. Let students know they can speak to you after class if they have specific concerns about themselves or another student. Know how to make student referrals if they are needed.
* Ensure that this guide’s research-based advice regarding bystander actions will not contradict your school’s rules or policies. You should also ensure that the school has a clear method for reporting bullying incidents, as you will want to share this protocol with students at the conclusion of the discussion.

**Preparation**

* If planning a discussion following coverage of a case in the news, teachers should research the details, including responses of the school’s administrators and students (if known), as well as any criminal charges that may have been filed. Here is one example, a January 2011 retrospective of coverage related to the Phoebe Prince case: [www.boston.com](http://www.boston.com/community/moms/articles/2011/01/16/its_a_year_later_and_not_much_has_changed/).
* If there has not been a recent case in the news, another option for framing discussion might be talking about celebrities who have admitted to being bullied as youth. Do a little research on a particular celebrity and his/her story.
* Consider the long-term impact of bullying on the individual as well as the school as a whole. Of course, the victim can suffer both physical and psychological harm, but if incidents go unreported or the school does not take action, the entire school climate can suffer. Students may feel intimidated even if they are not specific targets of bullying.
* Consider the following statistics from [StopBullyingNow.com](http://www.stopbullyingnow.com): (1) Adults only intervene in four percent of bullying incidents; (2) peers only intervene in 11 percent of bullying incidents; and (3) roughly 25 percent of students in America have been the victim of bullying at least once in the past year.
* [Official Bullying Trailer 2012](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W1g9RV9OKhg)

**Introducing discussion to students**

We should all think of our school as a community. That community is harmed when some of its members intentionally hurt their peers. We all need to work together to make sure this doesn’t happen and that everyone feels safe. Teachers will intervene if they witness instances of student bullying, but there are fewer of them compared to the number of students in a school, and sometimes bullying occurs in places and at times when adults cannot easily observe it. That is why we encourage students to speak up and report what happened to them, or report what they’ve seen happen to someone else, and also to offer support—in whatever way is comfortable—to a student who has been mistreated.

We want to be clear that we do not want students to confront (“get in the face of”) a student who is mistreating them or a peer. This is for two reasons. First, our school rules do not allow physical or verbal violence against students for any reason (state this rule in whatever way students are accustomed to hearing it), even if you feel retaliation (“getting back at the person”) is justified. If we respond to violence with violence, it just continues a vicious cycle of negative behavior. Second, sometimes aggressively confronting a student who is bullying can be embarrassing for the person being mistreated, and it may even make things worse for that person in the long run. Some alternatives to aggressive confrontation might be to say something like “Not cool” or to stand silently with the target as a show of support. Another option would be to support the mistreated student *after* the incident, perhaps helping that person report what happened.

So YES, report the incident and support the student who was mistreated. But NO, do not get in a verbal or physical fight with a student who is displaying bullying behavior. (Refer to key school rules as applicable, e.g., “Use kind words” or “Keep your hands to yourself.”)

Now we’re going to talk about some things we can all work on so that together, we feel safer as a community. Before we start, I want to make sure that everyone knows how to report a bullying incident (go over your school’s protocol). Also, if anyone wants to talk with me after class about something that has happened to them or another person, or about any other concerns, I am more than happy to aid you in finding intervention.

**Options for student discussion questions**

1. How can bullying harm the school community, even for students who are not directly mistreated? What beliefs or assumptions will students have if they see that neither adults nor peers do anything to prevent or stop bullying?
2. (Refer to the three statistics from [StopBullyingNow.com](http://stopbullyingnow.com).) Do these statistics seem true to you? Do you think they are true at our school? What are some reasons why students might not want to report bullying? If someone is a target, might he or she be embarrassed? If a student is reporting an incident that involves another person, would the reporter fear becoming a target him or herself? Might the mistreated student believe that “adults won’t do anything about it, so it’s not worth reporting”?
3. (If using celebrity angle to open discussion) When celebrities admit to being victims of bullying, do you think that helps students come forward to tell their own stories? If not, what would encourage mistreated students and witnesses to report incidents of bullying? How well is our school doing in terms of encouraging reporting of incidents?
4. (If referring to bullying case in the news) In this case, are you satisfied with the response of adults and students in the school following the incident? Are there things they could have done, or done better, to help the mistreated student?
5. In our school, if someone reports bullying, will he or she usually get the help s/he needs? If not, what could we be doing better as a community to support that process?
6. Do students in this school generally support fellow students who are bullied? If not, what could we be doing better as a community to increase our support? Without naming names, have you ever provided support to a mistreated peer, or witnessed a classmate providing support? What kind of support was provided? Was the support helpful?
7. What are some things we can do to safely support a peer who is being bullied? What do you think a mistreated student would want his/her classmates to do? (Remind students not to name names.) Research tells us that targets of bullying most often want simply to feel that they are not alone, and that the bullying was not their fault. Or, they want to feel that an adult helped them when the incident was reported. (For more detail, see the [Youth Voice Project](http://www.youthvoiceproject.com).)

Task: Using 21st century skills to address bullying in school. Students can choose a variety of tools to create an arena to demonstrate their ability to communicate bullying to a variety of stakeholders.

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| **Activity** | **Activity Description** |
| **Assess needs** | Have students write and take a survey of other students in your school to find out about their cyber-bullying experiences. Have them collect the data anonymously and report their results to school administrators by age and gender. Use any forum online to create and have an online survey and collect the data. Use an online spreadsheet to analyze the data from home or school.  |  |
| **Evaluate your AUP** | Obtain a copy of your school's acceptable use policy for the use of the school computers and network. Have students determine whether it adequately addresses the kinds of cyber-bullying situations that students are encountering. Use a secure threaded discussion tool, to discuss the issues. Collaborate in evaluating the policy on a wiki/website. Then make the policy prominent on a school Web site and/or post on a blog or a wiki to solicit community comments.  |  |
| **Create a cyberbullying policy** | Have students write a stand-alone policy to prevent and address cyber-bullying in your school. Collaborate in creating the policy using weebly.com, a wiki, or have a structured discussion by posting questions with a secure threaded discussion tool. Make the policy prominent on a school Website, a blog, or a wiki.  |  |
| **Publish resources** | Have students write and publish a “quick guide” about cyber-bullying, including what to do when it happens and where to go for help. Use using weebly.com, or a wiki, to facilitate collaboration during the writing stage. Publish the guide on your school's Web site or on a blog to invite comments.  |  |
| **Check your disciplinary policy** | Have students analyze your school's written disciplinary policy to determine whether and where it addresses cyber-bullying.  |  |
| **Propose a policy for cell phones, PDAs, and MP3 players** | Chances are that your school's policies do not address all the mobile networking hardware and applications available to students. Have students propose a policy that is fair to both students and staff and that supports learning. Use using weebly.com, or a wiki, to enable the class or school to contribute ideas and set the policy collectively.  |  |
| **Develop an online reporting tool** | Have students develop a proposal for a link on your school's Web site that sends an e-mail to your school's administrator, including allowing the forwarding of offensive messages. Use using weebly.com, or a wiki to create a media-rich presentation to publicize the reporting tool to the school community.  |  |
| **Develop camera phone tips** | Have students make a list of do’s and don'ts that help prevent cyber-bullying, and publish the list in a flier and on your school's Web site. Use using weebly.com, or a wiki to allow students to contribute ideas.  |  |
| **Make a tip sheet** | Have students collaborate to create a tip sheet for students affected by cyber-bullying, and publish it on a school Web page or a flier. Use using weebly.com, or a wiki to allow students to contribute ideas.  |  |
| **Survey school staff** | Have students write and conduct a survey to find out your school staff's perceptions of cyber-bullying. Have them compare these findings to a survey of students and present their results to the staff. Use using weebly.com, or a wiki to create an online survey to collect your data.  |  |
| **Create a Home Connection page** | Allow students to use their own words to tell parents and guardians what they need to know about cyber-bullying. Use using weebly.com, or a wiki to collaborate on and edit the page. Then get permission to post the page on your school's Web site, on a class blog, or in a wiki.  |  |
| **Make a video** | Have students write a script and use student actors to teach parents and guardians about some typical cyber-bullying scenarios. Allow other teachers to show the video at parent meetings. Use A website creator and get permission to upload the video to a class blog or to a video-sharing site.  |  |
| **Write a news release** | Have students write a news release for local newspapers, telling the community about your class or school's efforts related to cyber-bullying prevention, including where to get more information. Give the news release to your district press officer or office for approval and distribution. Use using weebly.com, or a wiki to publish your news on a Web site, a blog, or a wiki.  |  |
| **Hold a poster contest** | Invite students to design cyber-bullying prevention posters. Ask some teachers, administrators, and parents to judge the entries. Use A website creator to create an online art gallery to display the submissions and winners.  |  |
| **Teach a lesson** | Have students create and teach a lesson about cyber-bullying to younger students in your school or district. Share their lesson plans with the teachers of those grades and get their feedback. Then have students revise the lesson and present it. Use using weebly.com, or a wiki to turn the lesson into a media-rich presentation.  |  |
| **Be a role model** | Have students mentor younger students on a regular basis about bullying and cyber-bullying. Use using weebly.com, or a wiki, such as a secure threaded discussion tool.  |  |
| **Write a letter to the editor** | Have students write about cyber-bullying issues for the school or community newspaper. Use using weebly.com, or a wiki and publish your letters to a blog where other students and community members can post comments.  |  |
| **Create a Bystander Code of Ethics** | Have students collaborate and publish (in print or online) a code of ethics that explains the responsibilities of students who witness cyber-bullying. Use using weebly.com, or a wiki and set up a wiki for student collaboration. Create a threaded discussion or a blog to continue the discussion on an ongoing basis.  |  |
| **Create a social networks tip sheet** | Have students create and publish a list of tips about how to avoid cyber-bullying situations on social networking sites. Use using weebly.com, or a wiki to design a Web site, a blog, or a wiki to publish your tips online.  |  |
| **Make it happen online** | Have students plan their own school-wide cyber-bullying prevention activity and get others to sign on. Set a goal for the minimum number of people you want to participate. When that number of people sign on, take your planned action. Use an online tool, such as the platform provided by thepoint.com, to organize and conduct your campaign. Use a variety of a website creator to support and publicize the process. Students at NDCL use: <http://www.students.weebly.com> |  |