

Classroom activities: *Everyday heroes*

If students speak up to discourage bullying, the bullying often stops. Help children to connect to and reflect on the experiences and feelings of others and foster the courage of the everyday hero to take a stand against bullying.

What's going on?

- 1 **What is a hero?** Make a list of heroes nominated by students on the board. Along side this list, write their actions and characteristics. e.g.
 - Directed people to safety (smart)
 - Knew the right thing to do (dependable)
 - Risked life to rescue someone (courageous)
 - Spoke up to prevent a wrong (strong)
 - Stopped a friend from doing the wrong thing (caring)

* *Emphasise that "killing baddies" is rarely necessary or heroic.*
- 2 **The "unsung hero"**. Discuss people whose actions are often unrecognized. Brainstorm unsung heroes, such as a student who helps someone being bullied, or witnesses who report a crime, a grandparent or a teacher.
- 3 **Read short biographies** of heroes from history, the Australian of the Year awards, and newspaper articles of local heroes. Add their actions and characteristics to the list.
- 4 **Find out about your students' bystander experiences** using a confidential questionnaire and discuss the students' answers (You may like to use the Bullying. No Way! simple Bystander questionnaire for primary students in the Teaching resource catalogue).

Think about it

- 1 **Talk about** different types of bystanders, the roles that bystanders play and the effects they have upon bullying behaviour. There are those who choose not to get involved with the bullying (this may support the bullying behaviour), those who choose to get involved to stop the bullying, and those who encourage the bully.
- 2 **Share examples** of real life situations (without mentioning names), read a story or show a video which enables children to identify with characters or animals that are being mistreated. E.g. Using stories.
- 3 **Discuss the situations or texts** using these guidelines. Consider the feelings of those involved, including those who are bullying, those who are being bullied, and those who are looking on. Think of a time when someone helped you. How did it make you feel? Think of a time when you helped someone. How did it make you feel? Why do some people choose not to get involved? Why do

some people encourage bullying? What is the difference between dobbing and reporting or asking a teacher for support? What might bystanders do when they see other children being picked on or hurt and why? Has anyone seen a bystander stop someone teasing another person? If so, what did they do or say? What are some other things that a bystander could do to stop or reduce bullying? Identify which responses are most effective i.e. which ones are more likely to work and which ones will keep everyone safe.

- 4 **Discuss differences** between heroes on television or in movies, and real-life heroes, whether anyone can be a hero and how. Develop a shared definition of a hero.
- 5 **Write** a short essay or create a portrait of a hero, and design a logo symbol of their heroic behavior or characteristics.

Make a difference

- 1 **Brainstorm a list of potential situations and responses.** How can we all be everyday heroes and still keep ourselves safe? Talk about situations and what everyday heroes would do or say.
- 2 **Generate ideas about how to reinforce heroic action** e.g. Make up / decorate hero awards or certificates to present to students who do something heroic; at the end of day meeting make it a routine to ask: Who did you help today? Who was a hero in your eyes?
- 3 **Role play** ways in which bystanders can help stop others being picked on, without taking unreasonable and unacceptable risks.
- 4 **Invite everyday heroes to school** to discuss their occupations. Possibilities include a firefighter, police officer, park ranger, nurse, animal recovery worker, lifeguard, conservationist, and many others. Have them explain their daily activities, equipment, training, what they contribute and why they enjoy their jobs.
- 5 **Encourage each other** to look for opportunities to be a hero, to watch out for others in the school community and to be helpful when someone is being hurt or picked on. Give them an award.
- 6 **Revisit** in a week and share what you've noticed about behaviours towards one another.
- 7 **Set up a classroom or public display** on a bulletin board titled "Our Heroes". Celebrate with a "hall of heroes" complete with invited guests, refreshments, and a guided tour by students.
- 8 **Recognise everyday heroes** as a daily or weekly event in the classroom or whole school assembly.
- 9 As a class brainstorm which people within the school, students can talk to about instances of bullying, violence and harassment? Make a list for distribution.
- 10 **Formulate statements of rights and responsibilities** concerning how they would like each other to behave. E.g. We are kind and caring towards each other. We will help children who are being bullied. We will include children who are left out of our games.