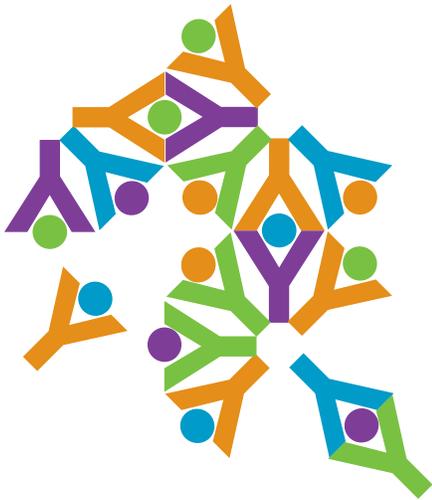




## Actions for Allies

Think about the following as a menu of actions you can draw from when you see hurtful bullying situations take place.



### When stepping into a bullying situation:

- ▶ **Put safety first.** It's always important to think of your own safety, the safety of the person being targeted and the safety of anyone else who is present. Could speaking up make the situation worse for the person? Does the situation call for immediate help from an adult? Should you connect with a trusted adult to make them aware of what's happening and to talk about things you could do in the situation if it continues to happen?
- ▶ **Stay calm.** When you see someone being hurt physically or emotionally or both, it's easy to lose your cool and to react out of anger or fear. Think about what you sound like when you respond with "clear mind" as opposed to "mud mind." Find ways to calm yourself (like taking deep breaths) so that you can be aware of your thoughts and feelings before moving to action.
- ▶ **Don't retaliate.** Even though your first thought might be to do something back to the person who is being hurtful, don't react by using the same kinds of negative behaviors to get back at the person. This can make a situation much worse for everyone.
- ▶ **Get the person being targeted away from the situation.** If it's important to help someone get away from a situation right away, you might step in and say something like this to the person being targeted: "I've been looking for you! We need to go to see Mr. Williams right now!" This may not address the actual bullying behavior, but it does help the person get to safety – and it shows you care.
- ▶ **"Name it" publicly.** If it makes sense for the situation, calmly, clearly and respectfully confront the person doing the bullying by saying something like, "Please stop what you're doing – your words are really hurtful" or "This is not cool – you need to calm down and stop being mean" or "I would never stand by if people were treating you like this. You need to stop." Depending on your relationship with the person, it may even make sense to ask if he or she would like to go someplace else to cool down and talk.
- ▶ **Confront privately.** You may decide it would be helpful to talk to the person doing the bullying privately about his or her actions. If you do this, let the person know that you're not only concerned about how they're treating other people, but you're



also concerned about what may be going on with them. (If you do decide to confront privately, find a way to also connect with the person who was being targeted to let them know you're also concerned about them.)

- ▶ **Use “softening statements.”** Softening statements are also helpful when you confront someone who is being hurtful – whether you're doing this publicly or privately. An example of a softening statement is “I care about you and know you wouldn't want to intentionally hurt others and I'm concerned about . . .” By beginning a conversation with a statement like this, you show the person that you really care about him or her and that you are concerned about his or her *behavior*. Softening statements also help keep people from getting defensive.
- ▶ **Look to your friends for support.** Using your voice in these kinds of situations can be really scary and takes courage. Look to your friends to be alongside you as you use your voice and ask them to use their voices in helpful ways as well.

### When supporting people who are targeted:

- ▶ **Make it clear that you don't support the hurtful behaviors.** This will be clear to the person if you use your voice to interrupt a situation when it's happening, but if you can't interrupt the situation, be sure to let the person know that you don't support those kinds of actions.
- ▶ **Connect with and spend time with the person.** The most important things that young people report that their peers can do to help them when they've experienced bullying are to spend time with them, listen to them, talk to them, and share ideas and advice. This doesn't mean that you have to develop a deep and ongoing relationship with the person (although you just might!), but do think about checking in with them to see how they're doing. Ask them what would be helpful from you in the future if the bullying behaviors continue. (In return, make sure you're honest about what you can and cannot do.) Also look for opportunities to include them in public ways – invite them to sit with you at lunch or on the bus, to walk with you between classes, or to join your youth group.
- ▶ **Help them get help.** Young people also report that having their peers offer to go with them to talk with adults about being bullied can be really helpful. Make this offer – especially if you have witnessed the situations that are causing such harm. Talk together with adults about the kinds of action both of you could take if the situations continue.

