MODULE **2**

CREATING A SUPPORTIVE CLASSROOM CLIMATE

Self-Study Workbook

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Contents

Creating a **Safe and Respectful Environment** in **Our Nation's Classrooms**

Creating a Supportive Classroom Environment

⏱ 5 minutes

This self-study module for *Creating a Safe and Respectful Environment in Our Nation's Classrooms* is the second of two modules designed to equip teachers, other educators, and support personnel who work with students with the tools to reduce the incidence of bullying behavior and build a more supportive classroom environment. This workbook has been developed for those for whom a trainer-led group is not feasible. Although the user will miss out on the benefits of group discussion and brainstorming, he or she will have access to all the data and information provided in the live training version.

Learning objectives are interspersed throughout the course to guide you to the major points in the material and to help you track your progress. To obtain maximum benefit, each person pursuing this course of self-study should study the material, write a thoughtful response where asked, and answer the questions for reflection at the end of each section, each of which is designed to address the associated learning objective. Information sheets at the end of the workbook summarize important information or list additional resources for further study.

Goals/Objectives of Study

Participants will:

- Consider what a supportive classroom climate looks like and how it can prevent bullying.

- Examine the role of teacher-to-student and student-to-student relationships in building a supportive classroom climate.

- Explore strategies for preventing bullying in the classroom, including establishing a culture of respect for differences among students.

- Consider how a web of positive support among students and other adults across the school community can help prevent bullying.

- Identify and commit to using one new strategy for preventing bullying in your daily work with students.

How to Complete This Workbook

1. **Inspect the table of contents** to get a sense of the topics covered in this workbook. By referring to it as you proceed, you can track your progress.

2. **Write thoughtful responses** to questions about your experience. The questions precede some sections and are scattered throughout the material. As you proceed,

you will be asked to return to your response and compare it to information provided in the section, and you will likely use your response to augment that information.

3. **Consider the learning objectives** as you approach each section. Objectives indicate important information that you are being asked to master.

4. **Work through the workbook** in sequence. The information is laid out to incrementally build your knowledge and skills. Supply information where you are asked to do so.

5. **Answer the questions for reflection**, which are followed by the correct responses and tied to the applicable learning objective.

6. **Review included information sheets** for additional information.

> *NOTE: Throughout these self-paced study modules, you will find reference numbers for citations indicated by a number in parentheses—for example, "(2)"—following content based on that reference. For a full list of the sources noted, see the **References** section, pages 26–27.*

Self-Assessment 1

The following questions ask you to consider your level of knowledge related to positive classroom climate and your confidence in using various skills presented within this training module. Please provide your best self-assessment from your perspective on the following questions *as you begin this training*.

On a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being "Limited Understanding" and 4 being "Extensive Understanding," how would you rate your understanding of what makes a positive classroom climate as you begin this training?

Limited Understanding			Extensive Understanding	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	☐

On a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being "Not at All Confident" and 4 being "Highly Confident," how would you rate your level of confidence in using each of the following 10 skills to make the classroom climate more positive as you begin this training?

1. Identifying elements of a positive classroom climate.

Not at All Confident			Highly Confident	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	☐

2. Describing the benefits for students of having a positive classroom climate.

Not at All Confident			Highly Confident	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	☐

3. Identifying things that teachers do that are important for creating a positive, supportive classroom.

Not at All Confident			Highly Confident	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	☐

4. Knowing how to promote positive relationships among students in my classroom through inclusion.

Not at All Confident			Highly Confident	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	☐

5. Knowing how to promote positive relationships among students in my classroom through respect.

Not at All Confident			Highly Confident	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	☐

6. Knowing how to promote positive relationships among students in my classroom through communication.

Not at All Confident			Highly Confident	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	☐

7. Using positive classroom management strategies, including classroom discussions and ground rules.

Not at All Confident			Highly Confident	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	☐

8. Teaching bystander intervention skills.

Not at All Confident			Highly Confident	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	☐

9. Using a variety of positive strategies to promote a positive, supportive classroom climate.

Not at All Confident			Highly Confident	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	☐

10. Working with other adults in my school to build a positive web of support for students.

Not at All Confident			Highly Confident	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	☐

Features of a Positive Classroom Environment

When other people don't call us by our names and we don't use theirs, we lose an important part of who we are. It also is difficult to have a real conversation or form a relationship with someone without sharing that first layer of identity. Throughout this workbook, we will look at strategies for creating the kind of supportive classroom climate in which bullying is less likely to occur. Just like calling people by their names, many of the strategies we will review involve simple actions that encourage positive relational connections within the classroom.

Bullying presents a significant challenge for teachers. This workbook is designed to equip you to successfully address and reduce bullying in your classroom while creating an environment that enhances student learning. Module 2 builds on Module 1 and focuses on creating a supportive classroom environment as a deterrent to bullying and to promote a climate in which students can learn more effectively.

> **REMEMBER:** By referring to bullying behavior, rather than calling someone a bully, we shift from labeling people to calling out actions.

Your Experience Questions

1. What would you see going on in a classroom in which there is a supportive climate for students? _____

    _____

2. How would teachers be relating to their students and students with one another?

    _____

    _____

3. What three words would you use to describe a supportive classroom climate?

    _____

    _____

    _____

Learning Objectives

1. Describe the range of connections student engagement encompasses.

2. Distinguish between emotional and physical safety.

3. Depict the extent of the school environment.

4. Enumerate the benefits of a positive classroom.

Bullying Review

Bullying is any unwanted, aggressive behavior(s) among students that involves an observed or perceived imbalance of power and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated.

Bullying may hurt or distress the targeted youth by causing physical, psychological, social, or educational harm.

Three Core Elements of Bullying

- Unwanted, aggressive behavior

- An observed or perceived imbalance of power between the student(s) doing the bullying and the student(s) being bullied

- Behavior that is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated

> *NOTE: If you did not complete self-study Module 1,* Understanding and Intervening in Bullying Behavior*, see **Information Sheet 1: Facts About Bullying Behavior** for an important summary of the information shared in that module.*

Engagement—Safety—Environment

Clearly, students' classroom experience strongly influences their response to school and learning. Safe and supportive schools that effectively prevent bullying possess foundational positive classroom cultures. (12) Three features are central to a supportive classroom setting for students: (10)

- Engagement

- Safety

- Environment

Engagement is characterized by strong relationships among students, teachers, families, and schools, as well as strong connections between schools and the broader community. Student engagement is multifaceted and includes the following:

- *Behavior* such as maintaining good attendance, following rules, completing assignments, coming to class prepared, and participating in class and school activities

- *Positive emotions* conveyed by students such as liking school and being interested in and identifying with school

- *Cognitive expression* whereby students exert the effort to do well in school, self-regulate, show high academic self-concept, and set goals for academic success

- *Connectedness*—a sense of belonging at school—which is fostered by relationships with other students and staff who are respectful, trusting, supportive, and caring

- *Respect for diversity* through cultural and linguistic competence (behaviors, attitudes, and policies that enable people to work effectively in cross-cultural situations), an awareness of one's own cultural identity, and an understanding about differences, while celebrating the variations among cultures and ethnic groups

- *School participation*, as demonstrated by the connection among staff, students, families, and the community at large and their involvement in school activities and governance

Safety involves schools and school-related activities in which students are protected from violence, bullying, harassment, and substance use. Safety includes the school's responsibility for managing emergencies, including violence, crime, natural disasters, epidemics, and accidents. Safety includes the following:

- *Emotional:* supporting individuals to feel secure when expressing emotions, to feel confident when taking healthy risks and embracing challenges, and to feel excited to try something new

- *Physical:* protecting all stakeholders—families, caregivers, students, school staff, and the community—from violence, theft, and exposure to weapons and threats, thus establishing a secure learning environment; includes preventing bullying, cyberbullying, and substance use

Environment encompasses the facilities, classrooms, school-based health supports, and disciplinary policies and practices at the school. Environment includes the following:

- *Physical* upkeep, ambient noise, lighting, indoor air quality, and thermal comfort in the school's physical building and its location within the community

- *Instructional*, behavioral, and personal aspects of the classroom experience

- *Physical health* and well-being of the school community and its members

- *Mental health*—emotional and psychological well-being—of individuals, promoting healthy development and functioning and increasing the capacity of individuals to live productive lives while striving to reach their full potential

- *Discipline*, rules, and strategies applied in school to manage student behavior and practices used to encourage self-discipline

At its core, a supportive classroom is a place in which students feel connected, safe, and involved. **Information Sheet 2: Features of a Supportive Classroom Climate** restates the aspects of the three features.

Benefits of a Positive Classroom

A positive classroom provides many benefits for students that help reduce the chance of bullying. Students who feel close to their teachers also tend to work harder in school, attend school more regularly, and have more confidence in their academic abilities. In short, a positive classroom climate helps students in the following ways: (5, 7, 10)

- Do better academically

- Attend school more regularly, leading to higher graduation rates

- Feel better about themselves and have better relationships

- Engage in fewer risky behaviors such as drinking alcohol or using drugs

- Engage less in bullying and other problem behaviors

Clearly, a positive classroom environment promotes the educational mission. Considering the five benefits together, they suggest a primary benefit of students' increased capacity for participation and learning.

Benefits for Teachers and Staff

A positive school and classroom environment tends to strengthen student and adult feelings of being valued and connected to the school, which is important in reducing or preventing bullying in schools and classrooms. Feeling valued and connected, moreover, are important predictors of the willingness of staff members to intervene in bullying episodes and their developing an elevated sense of confidence in doing so. Feeling comfortable intervening correlates with expectations of support and having intervention skills. (3)

Expectation of support comes from connection with the school community—teachers, staff, paraeducators, and students—and is generated naturally when positive relationships communicate trust, affirmation, and concern.

Intervention skills come from learning effective strategies for responding to suspected bullying episodes (see Module 1).

Bullying Is a Relationship Problem That Requires a Relationship Solution

Bullying behavior is a complex social interaction that takes many forms and is heavily influenced by the social context. As discussed in Module 1, simplistic strategies are ineffective in reducing bullying behavior in schools. You have seen that reducing bullying requires a multifaceted approach that includes prevention, immediate response, information gathering, appropriate consequences, and support for serious incidents. No doubt you can see that incorporating these strategies throughout a school community dedicated to maintaining a general culture of respect—with students, families, administrators, teachers, paraeducators, and staff such as bus drivers, nurses, cafeteria workers, and front office staff—enhances bullying prevention efforts.

> **REMINDER:** All approaches must conform to school policies and procedures for dealing with bullying.

Although numerous factors influence bullying behavior, a positive classroom environment inevitably includes positive relationships and connections, which are aspects of engagement—a central feature of a positive and supportive classroom environment. Relationships include teacher-to-student and student-to-student connections. We will now consider the power of teacher-to-student relationships and ways teachers can encourage positive relationships among their students.

Questions for Reflection (Refer back to previous content as needed.)

1. Which of the following is not a benefit of having a positive classroom? (Check all that apply.)

   ☐ a. Increased student capacity for learning

   ☐ b. Reduced involvement with social media

   ☐ c. Reduced incidence of bullying

   ☐ d. Enhanced self-esteem

   ☐ e. Decreased risky behavior

2. (Fill in the blanks.) Supporting students to feel secure about expressing feelings increases their sense of _____ safety, and protecting students from bodily harm provides _____ safety.

3. Which feature of a supportive classroom setting is characterized by a sense of belonging? (Check one.)

   ☐ a. Engagement

   ☐ b. Safety

   ☐ c. Environment

4. (True or False?) *Environment*, as a term used in this training, is confined to instructional arrangements at a school or in a classroom—not to disease prevention or room temperature. _____

Reflection Answers

Answers to the questions include the number of the objective to which they relate.

1. **b.** Reduced involvement with social media. (Objective 4)

2. Supporting students to feel secure in expressing feelings increases their sense of **emotional** safety, and protecting students from bodily harm provides **physical** safety. (Objective 2)

3. **a.** Engagement (Objective 1)

4. **False.** *Environment* covers all facilities, classrooms, school-based health supports, and disciplinary policies and practices at the school. (Objective 3)

The Power of Teacher-to-Student Relationships

⏱ 7 minutes

Your Experience Questions

1. Thinking back to your youth, who was a grown-up who was there for you, providing a positive and nurturing influence in your life? _____

2. What did they do that was special? _____
   _____
   _____

Learning Objectives

1. List qualities and actions of positive, nurturing adults that teachers bring to students in a caring and supportive classroom.

2. Name at least three of the five important things teachers do in a supportive classroom.

Anyone a child encounters has the potential to serve as a positive and nurturing influence. When thinking of influential adults, we automatically consider those who populate a student's *daily life*, such as parents and guardians, grandparents and other family members, coaches, teachers, counselors, youth workers, and congregation members. However, when you think through the memorable encounters of your life, you are also likely to find a broad range of characters, some of whom produced a stronger impression on you than you might have expected from the relatively minor role they played (as calibrated by actual *hours*), such as a librarian, piano teacher, neighbor, babysitter, or medical professional.

Did the grown-up in your life from Your Experience Question 1 fill one of the roles named? If not, add the role here to enlarge the population. _____
_____

When you consider what made that adult special to you, you are likely to find that his or her qualities and actions were similar to those present among participants in a caring and supportive classroom. In fact, individuals exert a powerful impact on young people's lives by way of simple actions when they do the following:

- Know your name

- Are pleased to see you

- Believe in you

- Expect the best from you

- Behave consistently

- Treat you with respect

- Let you know where you stand with them

If the special adult in your life that you described in Your Experience Question 2 did something that was different from those listed, add their quality or action here.

_____

_____

Important Things Teachers Do (5, 9)

What you model in your relationships with students and other adults contributes to positive student-to-student relationships. These relationships can help reduce bullying behavior by encouraging students to feel safe and confident and to stand up for each other. Of the many habits and qualities that make a difference in student lives, some of them make especially significant contributions to the teacher-to-student relationships found in supportive classrooms.

Stay available. Students prefer teachers who invite positive relationships, are accessible to them, and check in to find out how they are doing. Students respond to teachers who are interested in more than just their academic performance—who take a personal interest and show they care about all aspects of their lives.

Listen. Teachers who engage students in conversation about their lives and actively listen to their concerns and worries demonstrate respect, empathy, and an understanding of student needs. Listening conveys empathy, which is implicit in fairness; being treated fairly is certainly important to students.

Remain positive. Teachers who encourage and model positive thinking with their students have students who show elevated levels of engagement and preparedness. Such students also display elevated levels of self-confidence in their ability to overcome barriers. Students want teachers to identify and encourage their gifts and talents while challenging them.

Have fun. Student ease increases with teachers who keep control of the classroom and motivate with ready humor. Humor can help build positive personal connections.

Be real. Teachers who are comfortable being themselves around their students promote the kind of bonding that is important to sustaining a supportive classroom. Sharing appropriate personal information can help students know their teacher as a real person who values them enough to disclose some of his or her life with them.

Questions for Reflection (Refer back to previous content as needed.)

1. Applying the list of qualities and actions of positive, nurturing adults to the classroom, which one specifically calls for a response from the student?

   _____

2. Which three reworded habits and qualities listed make especially significant contributions to the teacher-to-student relationships found in supportive classrooms? (Check three.)

   ☐ a. Hear out student concerns

   ☐ b. Encourage humor

   ☐ c. Treat everyone the same

   ☐ d. Take a personal interest

   ☐ e. Hold back personal information

   ☐ f. Always stay upbeat and energetic
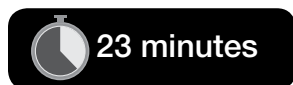
Reflection Answers

1. **Expect the best from you.** This quality holds the student accountable for individual class performance. (Objective 1)

2. **a.** Hear out student concerns (Listen), **b.** Encourage humor (Have fun), **d.** Take a personal interest (Stay available). (Objective 2)

SESSION 3

Encouraging Positive Student-to-Student Relationships

🕐 23 minutes

What Do You Think?

In the majority (57%) of bullying episodes in which students intervene, the bullying stops within how much time?

   ☐ a. 2 minutes

   ☐ b. 90 seconds

   ☐ c. 1 minute

   ☐ d. 10 seconds

Learning Objectives

1. Explain how a sense of belonging, essential to engagement, is fostered by a climate characterized by inclusion, respect, and open communication.

2. Name the role teachers play in promoting a sense of belonging among all students.

3. List two advantages of seeking student input to develop clear classroom ground rules.

4. Identify the most important aspect of your demeanor when responding to a suspected bullying episode.

5. Discuss all four options for student bystanders to a suspected bullying episode.

Just as teachers and other school staff members are more likely to intervene if they feel connected to their school and peers, students are more likely to be willing to intervene in a bullying situation if there is a positive school and classroom climate that also helps them feel connected to the school and their peers.

Although teachers cannot force students to be friends with each other, they can create the kind of supportive classroom that helps students develop age-appropriate friendship skills and that discourages bullying behavior while encouraging students to stand up for each other in bullying situations.

Review of Bystander Roles (12)

Students may play a variety of roles when witnessing a bullying situation:

- **Students who assist** bullying may not start or lead the bullying behavior but might encourage the behavior or occasionally join in.

- **Students who reinforc**e bullying give bullying an audience. They will often laugh or provide support for the student engaged in bullying, which may encourage the behavior to continue.

- **Outsiders** remain separate from the situation. They neither reinforce the bullying behavior nor defend the student being bullied. Some watch without saying anything.

- **Students who defend** actively comfort the student being bullied and may come to his or her defense.

When students move from being passive onlookers or outsiders to a bullying incident and intervene, they can have a powerful impact on stopping the behavior and sending a message that bullying is not acceptable.

What do you think? If you answered "D. 10 seconds" to the What Do You Think question at the beginning of this section, you were correct. (12) That's powerful evidence of the influence of bystanders.

To refresh your memory, jot down some of the perceived differences that may inspire one student to bully another. If you need help, check Module 1 to fill out your list.

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

Inclusion—Respect—Communication

We all need to feel like we belong, already described as feeling connected, which is a factor in engagement. A general sense of belonging is fostered by a climate of respect, inclusion, and open communication. The most important role here is the one teachers play by modeling for their students ways to make everyone feel included, showing respect for students and other adults, and demonstrating their willingness to communicate about bullying in formal and informal ways. (1, 4, 5, 12)

Inclusion

Teachers can design and implement class routines that engage student learning in a safe and inclusive environment and teach students to talk about differences in respectful and informative ways without drawing attention to individual students. Several specific actions go far in establishing a culture of inclusion.

Devise ground rules for inclusive behavior that welcomes all students. Make sure the ground rules clearly explain how students are to treat each other.

Expand student knowledge of diversity by exposing them to role models through literature, lessons, and classroom guests. Make sure students have the opportunity to choose books that portray diverse families as well as men and women who live outside gender stereotypes. Integrate examples of people from various backgrounds into classroom discussions and stories. Seek out diverse speakers, mentors, and role models for classroom participation.

Use inclusive language when referring to students, families, and those outside the classroom. Doing so models respectful and inclusive word choice.

A group that is often the target of bullying behavior—lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) students—reports that an inclusive curriculum alone has had positive outcomes. A 2015 study found that when the classroom curriculum included diverse groups—in terms of culture, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation—LGBTQ students, specifically, experienced an enhanced positive school climate. They experienced a decline in homophobic and negative remarks about gender expression and transgender people, and they felt safer. (4)

Respect

We cannot make students respect each other, but we can model interactions that demonstrate respectful behavior and attitudes. Teachers can create a social environment in which students are encouraged to get to know and respect each other.

Define respect clearly for students as it would appear in various school settings—classroom, hallway, bus, etc.—so students have a common understanding of what it looks like.

Set a tone of respect in the classroom, which includes managing student behavior so everyone feels safe. Well-managed classrooms are much less likely to have bullying.

Present accurate information and positive representations of students who other students in your classroom might perceive as different from them.

Make time to learn and practice a range of positive, respectful behaviors pertinent to student interactions and relationships. Connect students' experiences with learning, but avoid singling out individual students.

Talk about differences respectfully, providing examples of people with varied backgrounds and orientations.

Clarify civil discourse by teaching the difference between respectful debate and intolerant dialogue or name calling. This means providing a safe atmosphere in which to discuss these issues.

Communication

Communication takes many forms in the classroom: class lessons, conversations with individual students, posting information including classroom ground rules, and more. Always get permission from individual students before asking them in front of their fellow students to talk about their heritage, religion, sexual orientation, family background, or any other aspect they may consider private. Avoid putting them on the spot or surprising them with a request for personal information.

Classroom discussion can serve as an important and useful setting in which teachers promote respect, inclusion, and a generally positive environment. Teachers can use these forums to raise awareness about bullying and other issues, consider conflict resolution strategies, guide students through practicing appropriate behaviors, and provide students with a safe place to ask questions or express concerns. Regular classroom discussions and meetings also can keep teachers informed about what's going on with students.

Within the safety of the discussion, students who have been bystanders to conflict get the message that they are not alone in their distress at witnessing inappropriate or negative behavior, including bullying. They can brainstorm solutions to common bullying situations. Such discussions work best in classrooms where a culture of respect is already established. They can be held in the main classroom, during homeroom, or in the course of an advisory period. As always, be sure that you recommend actions that comply with school policy.

Establish discussion guidelines. Students should feel free to discuss issues without fear. Classroom meetings are not a time to discuss individual conflicts or gossip about others. Reinforce existing classroom ground rules.

Start the conversation. Focus on specific topics, such as bullying or respectful behaviors. Meetings can identify and address problems affecting the group as a whole. Stories should be broad and lead to solutions that build trust and respect among students. Use open-ended questions or prompts; for example:

"What do you think you would do if…?"

"What do you think might happen if you…?"

"If you could create the perfect response to the situation, what might it be?"

"How hard or easy would it be to step in? Why?"

"How can adults help?"

Remind students that they have a part in making the school a positive place to learn and that it is everyone's job to help make that happen. Encourage them to talk to teachers or other trusted adults if they see bullying or are worried about how someone is being treated.

Follow up when necessary. Monitor student body language and reactions. If a topic seems to be affecting someone, take the student aside afterward to talk about it. Be ready with resources to support students affected by bullying.

Positive Classroom Management

Managing a classroom to keep order and promote inclusion, respect, and communication also helps avert bullying. Teachers who employ positive classroom management do the following:

- Emphasize what students *should* do—rather than what they *should not* do
- Reinforce rules as role models who also follow them
- Use one-on-one feedback and avoid public reprimands
- Show students respect
- Reward good behavior

Clear Classroom Ground Rules

As we mentioned, ground rules that lay out classroom expectations regarding student behavior and their treatment of each other are a factor in building a sense of inclusion. Developing clear ground rules with student input gives students a stake in establishing their own culture of respect and responsibility and provides them a say in how they wish to be treated. Ground rules are most effective when they pertain to all students and help build a safe and inclusive environment and the following conditions are present:

- Tied to both positive and negative consequences

- Aligned with schoolwide rules
- Developed with student input
- Simple and understandable
- Posted in the classroom
- Fairly enforced

It is critical for teachers to teach, model, and reinforce expected classroom behavior as developed by students in order for them to be effectively operationalized.

Sample Anti-Bullying Ground Rules

Rules you have already developed may be somewhat different from those suggested in the following list. What is important is that classrooms adopt clear ground rules that pertain to all students and help build a safe and inclusive environment. (5, 12) The following are some examples:

- We will treat others with respect and not bully others.
- We will try to help students who are bullied.
- We will try to include students who are left out.
- If we know that somebody is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

> **REMINDER:** Kids often want to help, but they don't always know how.

Stepping Up Rather Than Standing By

Adults responding to an incident that appears to involve bullying must follow school policy. They should also use the four-part intervention protocol discussed in Module 1. Do you recall what those four parts are? If you are unable to recite them from memory, check the Module 1 workbook and enter the parts below.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Responding as the grown-up means you are modeling appropriate behavior while you enter the conflict. You should monitor your demeanor to avoid escalating the intensity of an incident. Therefore, you can help turn down the emotional heat of the situation by doing the following:

- Stay calm.
- Speak assertively rather than aggressively, and state school rules if necessary.

- Avoid assumptions about what you think is happening.
- Take time to listen carefully.
- Refrain from belittling, embarrassing, or labeling any of the students.

Students typically find the kind of positive classroom culture we're talking about to be highly effective at encouraging them to intervene in a bullying situation. However, they may not know what to do to stop the bullying behavior, or they may feel unsafe speaking up. Students often worry that if they say something, they're snitches. Younger children in particular need to understand the difference between tattling (trying to get someone in trouble) and reporting (trying to get someone out of trouble). Pay attention to what students tell you regarding their feelings or experience.

Responding confidently and safely as a bystander and ally to someone who appears to be under attack requires concrete skills, which students can practice in the classroom. Make sure they understand that intervening is one option among various choices, and discuss the following alternatives with them:

Walk away. Refuse to participate in the bullying behaviors and deny the incident an audience. Other behaviors—from laughing, to encouraging the student who is bullying, to fighting on behalf of the student who is being bullied—can make matters worse.

Offer support. Be an ally to the bullied student if it is possible do so safely. At the time of the episode, if it's safe, help the student who is being bullied leave the situation or get adult help to do so. Away from the situation, allies can offer support to the student who was bullied by listening and assuring the student that it was not his or her fault and by accompanying the student to seek help from a trusted adult.

Report the incident. Tell a trusted adult what is happening. Help students identify adults who can be trusted and know how to help. Make sure that students are aware that you are a safe and trustworthy adult through your actions and words.

Speak up assertively. Tell the person who is bullying to stop. The simple act of telling someone to stop can end the event and also empower other students to step up.

Additional ideas to support students in stepping up can be found in **Information Sheet 3: Stepping Up Rather Than Standing By**.

> REMINDER: Make time for students to practice the various intervention strategies and perhaps master them through role-play.

We are now going to take a detailed look at general strategies for building a caring and supportive classroom climate focused on the three features of supportive classroom settings identified earlier: engagement, safety, and environment. Many of the strategies also revolve around a sense of belonging among students in the classroom, which involves inclusion, respect, and communication.

Questions for Reflection (Refer back to previous content as needed.)

1. What are two principle advantages to sharing the responsibility with the students to set classroom ground rules? (Check two.)

   ☐ a. Students have a stake in enforcement.

   ☐ b. All students know the rules.

   ☐ c. Everyone has a stake in creating a culture that promotes engagement.

   ☐ d. Those who bully know it's not okay.

   ☐ e. Students can describe the treatment they want.

2. (Fill in the blanks with the following options: **respectfully, alone, safe, solutions, welcomes, diversity**.) A culture of inclusion _____ all students and enhances what everyone knows about _____. By modeling respect in all their interactions, teachers show students how to talk about differences _____ and help students feel _____. Classroom discussion provides a setting in which teachers can raise awareness about issues, students with concerns can realize that they are not _____, and everyone can brainstorm _____.

3. To intervene in an interaction that looks like bullying, an adult can help prevent the incident from escalating by doing the following: (Check one.)

   ☐ a. Bringing in other adults

   ☐ b. Announcing the rules

   ☐ c. Emphasizing positive relationships

   ☐ d. Presenting a calm demeanor

4. Draw lines connecting the bystander option to its proper description.

   a. Report the incident.   Tell the person who is bullying to stop.

   b. Walk away.   Tell a trusted adult.

   c. Speak up assertively.   Encourage the student being bullied.

   d. Offer support.   Deny the incident an audience.

5. The most important role teachers play to foster a sense of belonging in the classroom is that of the following: (Check one to complete the sentence.)

   ☐ a. Model

   ☐ b. Authority figure

   ☐ c. Mediator

   ☐ d. Bystander

Reflection Answers

1. **c.** Everyone has a stake in creating a culture that promotes engagement. **e.** Students can describe the treatment they want. (Objective 3)

2. A culture of inclusion **welcomes** all students and enhances what everyone knows about **diversity**. By modeling respect in all their interactions, teachers show students how to talk about differences **respectfully** and help students feel safe. Classroom discussion provides a setting in which teachers can raise awareness about issues, students with concerns can realize that they are not **alone**, and everyone can brainstorm **solutions**. (Objective 1)

3. **d.** Presenting a calm demeanor (Objective 4)

4. (Objective 5)

   a. Report the incident. ⟶ Tell the person who is bullying to stop.

   b. Walk away. ⟶ Tell a trusted adult.

   c. Speak up assertively. ⟶ Encourage the student being bullied.

   d. Offer support. ⟶ Deny the incident an audience.

5. **a. Model** (Objective 2)

Strategies for Creating a Supportive Classroom Climate

⏱ 11 minutes

This section provides a structure for brainstorming the characteristics of your own supportive classroom. As we discussed at the beginning of this module, the primary features of a supportive classroom are engagement, safety, and environment.

Engagement. School engagement is an essential part of a positive classroom climate, including the events and opportunities that lead to students gaining skills and experiences that allow them to feel safe in the school and classroom.

Safety. A positive classroom and school climate is one where students and everyone connected to the school feel safe both physically and emotionally. Establishing a norm within the classroom that bullying is not okay can have a significant impact on reducing rates of bullying behavior. It is also critical that teachers send a clear message to their students that they are concerned about bullying and that students can come to them if they have issues or concerns. Research suggests that only one in three students who are bullied tell an adult.

Environment. Although important to a supportive classroom culture, this feature extends to the safety and health of each student in the school. Environment includes all aspects of a school, including academics, physical and mental health supports

and services, the physical plant and its location within the community, and its disciplinary procedures. In the classroom, environment encompasses teachers' willingness to work directly with students who are bullying others or are being bullied.

Review the strategies associated with the three features of a supportive classroom climate below—engagement, safety, and environment. For each feature, check the box in the first column of *at least one strategy* that is currently an **area of strength** for you. (Check more if you choose.) Next, go back over the list of strategies and check the box in the second column of *at least one strategy for each feature* that is an **area to strengthen**. We will return to these items at the end of this training section.

Engagement

Area of Strength	Area to Strengthen	
☐	☐	Be a role model: Treat all students and colleagues respectfully.
☐	☐	Be proactive: Teach the difference between respectful debate and intolerant dialogue and name calling.
☐	☐	Be available: Check in with students regularly to see how they're doing. Let them know you're available to talk.
☐	☐	Listen: Engage students in conversation about what's happening in their lives, and actively listen.
☐	☐	Be positive: Encourage and model positive thinking while also providing positive strategies for dealing with adversity.
☐	☐	Have fun: Having a sense of humor and having fun are great ways to have personal connections and help students feel like they're part of a positive climate and culture.
☐	☐	Teach more inclusively: Integrate examples of people from different backgrounds into lessons, stories, and discussions. Use inclusive language and avoid organizing the classroom by gender or stereotype.

Safety

Area of Strength	Area to Strengthen	
☐	☐	Intervene: Step in to help during problematic situations. Students prefer that teachers actively use their power as adults and professionals to identify concerns and offer solutions.
☐	☐	Make a safe, bully-free culture the "norm." Talk about bullying on a regular basis.

☐ ☐ Encourage students to do what they love: Special activities, interests, and hobbies can boost confidence, help young people make friends, and protect them from bullying behavior.

☐ ☐ Keep communication open: Make time for daily conversations about students' lives and feelings and ask a variety of questions. Talk about bullying with them. If concerns come up, be sure to respond.

☐ ☐ Stay on top of things: Read and learn about bullying. Create supportive ground rules for your classroom.

☐ ☐ Use positive terms: Tell students *what* to do—not just *what not* to do.

☐ ☐ Teach positive relationship skills: Encourage students to be successful!

Environment

Area of Strength   Area to Strengthen

☐ ☐ Walk your talk: Weave positive behaviors into daily interactions with students and colleagues. Follow the rules yourself. Show students respect.

☐ ☐ Set a positive tone in your classroom: Manage student behavior well, demonstrating appropriate boundaries and expectations for positive relationships.

☐ ☐ Examine your own beliefs: Become more aware of your own assumptions, biases, or stereotypes. Do you expect boys to act one way and girls another? Challenge these assumptions and intervene when you hear others using questionable assumptions.

☐ ☐ Treat students fairly: Work directly with both students who are being bullied and students who are bullying others.

☐ ☐ Establish a culture of respect for differences: Make everyone feel they belong, and talk about differences in respectful and informative ways.

☐ ☐ Engage parents and youth: Work together to send a unified message against bullying.

☐ ☐ Create a safe environment: Have classroom meetings. Work with students to create and launch an awareness campaign in their classroom and school.

Information Sheet 4 at the end of this workbook provides the complete list of **Ten Things Students Wish Teachers Knew About Name-Calling and Bullying**.

Information Sheet 5 provides the three features and summarizes the **Strategies for Creating a Supportive Classroom Climate**.

A Note About Building a Web of Support

⏱ 7 minutes

A web of support is a multistrand "net" that helps prevent students from "falling through the cracks" of support. At a school, such a web should include people involved in the school but who perform jobs other than direct instruction. Many researchers agree that although teachers and other classroom professionals have a big role to play in bullying prevention, a multifaceted whole-school approach holds the greatest promise for addressing the problem of bullying. Who besides teachers at your school could participate in a web of support for students?

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

We hope that many if not all of the people you listed are included in efforts you are already making to create a caring and supportive classroom climate. When people across a school community are involved, it makes the teacher's job easier, and the classroom can become the hub of a larger schoolwide effort to address bullying.

> **REMEMBER:** As we have seen, students also have a powerful role to play as advocates for each other.

Everyone Has a Role

Although you might not have thought of families as contributing to a web of support at school, all family members play a significant role and can benefit from being included in bullying prevention. See http://www.stopbullying.gov for information on engaging caregivers and families in bullying prevention as well as other resources and support for addressing bullying behavior.

As for people at the school who are potentially strands in a web of support, did you consider bus drivers, teacher aids, security guards, secretaries, food service workers, janitors, and counselors? If not, add them to the previous list to see what kind of web your school might be able to create.

Information Sheet 6: Additional Resources can help you learn more about specific topics we have covered in this module.

Affirming What We Do and Planning Something New

Look back over the Strategies for Creating a Supportive Classroom Climate section on pages 19–21, and draw from your responses there to answer the final three questions of this module.

1. Identify up to three things you already do that help build a caring and supportive climate in your classroom.

   - _____

   - _____

   - _____

2. Identify three strategies you would like to strengthen to help build a caring and supportive classroom climate.

   - _____

   - _____

   - _____

3. Name one strategy you will commit to using with the students in your classroom the next time your class meets. _____

   _____

Information Sheet 7: Summary provides a summary of key points covered in both modules of this training. We encourage you to keep this document in an easily accessible location (e.g., planner, briefcase, desk drawer) for immediate reference if you find yourself needing to refresh your memory of the content covered in these two modules.

The steps you take now to build a caring and supportive classroom climate have the power to shape students' lives in ways that will affect them beyond their days in the classroom and will form a living legacy to your role as an educator.

"Children are living messages we send to a time we will not see."
The Stealing of America by John W. Whitehead, 1983

We hope this module gives you some new ideas to include in your daily work with students. Thank you for taking the time to examine how you can enhance your classroom and school environment.

Self-Assessment 2

Now that you have completed this module, please assess your learning, using the following questions from your perspective . Once you have responded to all of the following questions, compare your answers to the ones you gave as you began the training (pages 2–3). What changes do you note?

On a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being "Limited Understanding" and 4 being "Extensive Understanding," how would you now rate your understanding of what makes a positive classroom climate after completing the training?

Limited Understanding			Extensive Understanding	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	☐

On a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being "Not at All Confident" and 4 being "Highly Confident," how would you now rate your level of confidence in using each of the following 10 skills to the classroom climate more positive after completing the training?

1. Identifying elements of a positive classroom climate.

Not at All Confident			Highly Confident	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	☐

2. Describing the benefits for students of having a positive classroom climate.

Not at All Confident			Highly Confident	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	☐

3. Identifying things that teachers do that are important to creating a positive, supportive classroom.

Not at All Confident			Highly Confident	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	☐

4. Knowing how to promote positive relationships among students in my classroom through inclusion.

Not at All Confident			Highly Confident	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	☐

5. Knowing how to promote positive relationships among students in my classroom through respect.

Not at All Confident			Highly Confident	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	☐

6. Knowing how to promote positive relationships among students in my classroom through communication.

Not at All Confident			Highly Confident	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	☐

7. Using positive classroom management strategies, including classroom discussions and ground rules.

Not at All Confident			Highly Confident	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	☐

8. Teaching bystander intervention skills.

Not at All Confident			Highly Confident	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	☐

9. Using a variety of positive strategies to promote a positive, supportive classroom climate.

Not at All Confident			Highly Confident	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	☐

10. Working with other adults in my school to build a positive web of support for students.

Not at All Confident			Highly Confident	Don't Know
1	2	3	4	☐

Identify one new strategy for building a positive classroom climate, as presented in this training, that you are willing to employ in your daily work with students.

_____

_____

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Information Sheets

Use any of these sheets for reminders or additional support.

1. **Facts About Bullying Behavior**

2. **Features of a Supportive Classroom Climate**

3. **Stepping Up Rather Than Standing By**

4. **Ten Things Students Wish Teachers Knew About Name-Calling and Bullying**

5. **Strategies for Creating a Supportive Classroom Climate**

6. **Additional Resources**

7. **Summary**

Facts About Bullying Behavior

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among students that involves an observed or perceived imbalance of power. The behavior is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Both students who are bullied and students who bully others may have serious, lasting problems. Bystanders who witness bullying also may experience harm.

To be considered bullying, the behavior must be **unwanted** and **aggressive** and include the following items:

- **An observed or perceived imbalance of power.** Students who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same students. Power imbalances can be observed or they may be perceived between the student doing the bullying and the student being bullied.

- **Repetition.** Bullying behaviors are repeated multiple times or are highly likely to be repeated.

The Roles Students Play

Understanding the multiple roles students play in bullying situations can help schools prevent and respond to bullying. It is important to avoid labeling students as "bullies" or "victims" because such labels send the message that behavior cannot be changed. Labeling also fails to represent the multiple roles students might play in different bullying situations. These roles include the following:

- Students who bully by engaging in bullying behavior toward their peers

- Students who are the targets of bullying behaviors

- Students who are not directly involved in bullying but are bystanders who witness the behavior, including those who

  - *Assist* by encouraging or occasionally joining in

  - *Reinforce* by giving bullying an audience by laughing or providing support for the students engaging in bullying

  - *Remain as outsiders*, staying separate, neither reinforcing the bullying nor defending the student being bullied

  - *Defend* by actively comforting the student being bullied, even coming to the student's defense

Types of Bullying

There are four types of bullying:

1. **Verbal bullying** is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes the following:

   - Teasing

   - Name calling

   - Inappropriate sexual comments

   - Taunting

   - Threatening to cause harm

   - Making comments to embarrass or humiliate

2. **Social bullying**, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes the following:

   - Leaving someone out on purpose

   - Telling other children not to be friends with someone

   - Spreading rumors about someone

   - Embarrassing someone in public

   - Posting embarrassing images publicly or electronically

   - Making unwelcome contact of a sexual nature

3. **Physical bullying** involves hurting a person's body. Physical bullying includes the following:

   - Hitting/kicking/pinching

   - Spitting on

   - Tripping/pushing

   - Taking or breaking someone's things

   - Making mean or rude hand gestures

4. **Damage to property** involves theft, alteration, or damaging of someone's property to cause harm. It includes the following:

   - Taking away someone's personal property and refusing to give it back

   - Destroying someone's property in his or her presence

   - Deleting personal electronic information

The Context for Bullying: Where and When Bullying Happens

Bullying can occur in multiple contexts. Although most reported bullying happens in the school building, a significant percentage also happens in other places such as on the playground or the bus. Some of the other contexts in which bullying can occur include (but are not limited to) the following:

- School and school events

- Traveling to and from school

- A student's neighborhood

- The Internet

Cyberbullying, or electronic bullying, is considered a context or location in which many kinds of bullying can take place. Cyberbullying can include the use of e-mail, social network sites, cell phones, webcams, text messages, SMS or instant messaging, forums, gaming, Internet sites, and other electronic forms to do one or more of the following acts:

- Send, post, or share negative, harmful, false, or mean content

- Share personal or private information

- Embarrass or humiliate

- Verbally harass

- Socially exclude

- Threaten physical or psychological harm

Frequency of Bullying

There are three sources of federally collected data on youth bullying:

- The 2014–2015 School Crime Supplement (National Center for Education Statistics and Bureau of Justice Statistics) indicates that, nationwide, about 20% of students ages 12 to 18 experienced bullying.

- The 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) indicates that, nationwide, 20% of students in Grades 9–12 report having been bullied on school property in the 12 months preceding the survey.

- U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights Data Collection assembles data from every public school district, including data on harassment and bullying. It can be found at https://ocrdata.ed.gov/.

Source: https://www.stopbullying.gov/

Features of a Supportive Classroom Climate

Engagement involves strong relationships among students, teachers, families, and schools, as well as strong connections between schools and the broader community. Student engagement is multifaceted and is manifested in the following ways:

- Behavior such as maintaining good attendance, following rules, completing assignments, coming to class prepared, and participating in class and school activities

- Positive emotions conveyed by students such as liking school and being interested in and identifying with school

- Cognitive expression whereby students exert the effort to do well in school, self-regulate, show high academic self-concept, and set goals for academic success

- Connectedness—a sense of belonging at school—which is fostered by relationships with other students and staff who are respectful, trusting, supportive, and caring

- Respect for diversity through cultural and linguistic competence, an awareness of one's own cultural identity, and an understanding about differences, while celebrating the variations among cultures and ethnic groups

- School participation, as demonstrated by the connection among staff, students, families, and the community at large and their involvement in school activities and governance

Safety involves schools and school-related activities in which students are protected from violence, bullying, harassment, and substance use. Safety includes the school's responsibility for managing emergencies. Safety includes the following aspects:

- Emotional: supporting individuals to feel secure when expressing emotions, to feel confident when taking healthy risks and embracing challenges, and to feel excited when trying something new

- Physical: protecting all stakeholders—families, caregivers, students, school staff, and the community—from violence, theft, and exposure to weapons and threats, thus establishing a secure learning environment; includes preventing bullying, cyberbullying, and substance use

Environment encompasses the facilities, classrooms, school-based health supports, and disciplinary policies and practices at the school. Environment includes the following:

- Physical upkeep, ambient noise, lighting, indoor air quality and thermal comfort in the school's physical building, and its location within the community

- Instructional, behavioral, and personal aspects of the classroom experience

- Physical health and well-being of the school community and its members

- Mental health—emotional and psychological well-being—of individuals, promoting healthy development and functioning and increasing the capacity of individuals to live productive lives while striving to reach their full potential

- Discipline, rules, and strategies applied in school to manage student behavior and practices used to encourage self-discipline

Learn more about the material used in this handout at the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments website at https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/. Click on the "Safe and Healthy Students" drop-down menu to access more information on each of the three topics described above.

Stepping Up Rather Than Standing By

By applying the following strategies, you can help all students feel comfortable stepping up instead of standing by when witnessing a bullying situation.

Build a Positive School Climate

- Make sure younger children in particular understand the difference between tattling (trying to get someone in trouble) and reporting (trying to get someone out of trouble).

- Be a positive adult role model in young people's lives. The more positive adult relationships youth have, the better they do in school and the less violence they engage in.

- Work on strong, positive relationships with students. Connect with them and provide them with emotional support. Recognize their achievements and accomplishments.

- Acknowledge that bullying does occur and that being bullied can be painful. Never downplay what students tell you about how they're feeling or what they're experiencing.

Intervene and Model Positive Behavior When You See Bullying

- Stay calm.

- Speak up, be assertive (not aggressive), and clearly state school rules if necessary.

- Take time to listen. Don't try to fix a situation before you listen carefully.

- Avoid assumptions about what you think is happening.

- Never belittle, embarrass, or label any students.

Help Students Learn How to Become Effective Bystanders and Allies

- Make time for them to learn and practice positive strategies to be good allies.

- Don't communicate an expectation that students should always directly intervene when bullying occurs.

- Discuss safety concerns and brainstorm situation-specific strategies.

- Depending on the situation and comfort level of the youth involved, help them learn when it's appropriate to do the following:

  1. Walk away. Refuse to participate in the bullying behaviors.

  2. Support. Be a supportive friend or ally to the student who is being bullied.

  3. Report. Tell a trusted adult what is happening.

  4. Assertively tell. Tell the person to stop bullying.

For a more comprehensive list of strategies youth can use, go to http://www.stopbullying.gov/respond/be-more-than-a-bystander/index.html.

Ten Things Students Wish Teachers Knew About Name-Calling and Bullying

1. Take the issue of name-calling and teasing seriously. Rethink statements like, "Kids will be kids…" or "He didn't mean anything by that comment; he was just kidding."

2. Let students know that you are available to talk to them. If possible, set aside ten minutes of class time each week to discuss issues that students want to bring up. Get to know students as individuals.

3. Take time to listen. Don't try to "fix" a situation before you have taken time to listen carefully. Avoid making the situation worse by blaming the targeted student. Make sure your actions don't discourage students' honesty.

4. Don't harp on what should have been done in the past; focus on the present. Saying, "Why didn't you tell me sooner?" is not helpful.

5. Be a role model. If students observe you gossiping or exhibiting other bullying behaviors toward students, their families, or colleagues, they will interpret it as permission to behave similarly. Remember that everyone, including yourself, has biases that can influence behavior and that your words can have a strong impact.

6. Do not belittle, tear down, or publicly embarrass students. Although these strategies are common in competitive sports, they are ineffective in motivating students to do better.

7. Help students learn how to act as effective allies. Provide time for them to learn the range of behaviors practiced by good allies. Do not communicate the expectation that students should always directly intervene when bias incidents occur. Discuss safety concerns, and brainstorm effective alternative strategies with students.

8. Acknowledge when name-calling and bullying are occurring and that being the target of these incidents can be painful. Do not downplay what a student says he or she is feeling or experiencing.

9. Be proactive. Prepare your students to respond effectively to bias incidents, and become a partner with their families. Discuss name-calling and bullying and school policies that outline how these situations will be handled. Explore the different roles students can take in bias incidents – target, perpetrator, bystander, and ally, and help students consider responses to situations from the perspectives of each of these roles.

10. Be discreet and whenever possible, maintain confidentiality. Do not announce to the class when a student is having a problem with name-calling, bullying, or harassment. Whenever possible, help each student privately.

Source: Anti-Defamation League. (2018). *Ten things students wish teachers knew about name-calling and bullying.* New York, NY: Author. Retrieved from https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/ten-things-students-wish-teachers-knew-about-name-calling.

Strategies for Creating a Supportive Classroom Climate

Engagement

Engagement is a process of events and opportunities that lead to students gaining the skills and confidence to cope and feel safe in school.

- Be a role model. Treat all students and colleagues respectfully.

- Be proactive. Teach the difference between respectful debate and intolerant dialogue and name calling.

- Be available. Check in with students regularly to see how they're doing. Let them know you're available to talk.

- Listen. Engage students in conversation about what's happening in their lives and listen actively.

- Be positive. Encourage and model positive thinking while also providing positive strategies for dealing with adversity.

- Have fun. Being humorous and having fun are great ways to encourage personal connections and help students feel like they're part of a positive climate and culture.

- Teach more inclusively. Integrate examples of people from different backgrounds into lessons, stories, and discussions. Use inclusive language and avoid organizing the classroom by gender or stereotype.

> REMEMBER: Be discreet and maintain confidentiality. Never put individual students on the spot by asking them to talk about their heritage, religion, sexual orientation, or any other aspect they may consider private unless they want to share with the class. Don't announce when a student is having problems; rather, help each student privately whenever possible.

Safety

Safety pertains to the security of the school setting and school-related activities that encompass emotional and physical safety.

- Intervene. Step in to help during problematic situations. Students prefer that teachers actively use their power as adults and professionals to identify concerns and offer solutions.

- Make a safe, bully-free culture the "norm." Talk about bullying on a regular basis.

- Encourage students to do what they love. Special activities, interests, and hobbies can boost confidence, help young people make friends, and protect them from bullying behavior.

- Keep communication open. Make time for daily conversations about students' lives and feelings, and ask a variety of questions. Talk about bullying with them. If concerns come up, be sure to respond.

- Stay on top of things. Read and learn about bullying. Create supportive ground rules for your classroom.

- Use positive terms. Tell students *what* to do—not just *what not* to do.

- Teach positive relationship skills. Encourage students to be successful!

Environment

Environment includes all aspects of a school that promote student safety and student health.

- Walk your talk. Weave positive behaviors into daily interactions with students and colleagues. Follow the rules yourself. Show students respect.

- Set a positive tone in your classroom. Manage student behavior well, demonstrating appropriate boundaries and expectations for positive relationships.

- Examine your own beliefs. Become more aware of your own assumptions, biases, or stereotypes. Do you expect boys to act one way and girls another? Challenge these assumptions and intervene when you hear others using questionable assumptions.

- Treat students fairly. Work directly with both students who are being bullied and students who are bullying others.

- Establish a culture of respect for differences. Make everyone feel they belong, and talk about differences in respectful and informative ways.

- Engage parents and youth. Work together to send a unified message against bullying.

- Create a safe environment. Have classroom meetings. Work with students to create and launch an awareness campaign in their classroom and school.

Learn more from the following references:

- *Ready, Set, Respect! GLSEN's Elementary School Toolkit* (GLSEN, 2016)

- *Welcoming Schools: A Project of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation* (http://www.welcomingschools.org/)

- https://www.stopbullying.gov/

- *The Right to Be Safe: Putting an End to Bullying Behavior* (Meehan, 2011)

- *Ten Things Students Wish Teachers Knew About Name-Calling and Bullying* (Anti-Defamation League, 2018)

- *"Walking the Talk" Makes a Difference in Bullying Prevention* (Hirschstein et al., 2007)

Additional Resources

A comprehensive report by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine found that the most likely effective bullying prevention programs are whole-school, multicomponent programs that combine elements of universal and targeted strategies.[1] By analyzing the available evaluation data on several prevention models, the report found the following models or approaches to be effective or promising:

> A **public health model using a multi-tiered prevention framework** describes three levels of prevention: universal aims to reduce risk and strengthen skills for all students in a school setting; selective targets youth who are at risk for engaging in bullying or targets youth at risk of being bullied; and indicated preventive interventions are strategies of greater intensity tailored to meet youth needs. The universal level addresses whole-school or climate/culture changing programs, incorporating such factors as social skill development and social-emotional learning or self-regulation. The study found that researchers encourage the use of the multi-tiered prevention framework, and conceptual research supports it; yet there have not been enough large-scale studies to prove its effectiveness.

> **Positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS)** aims to prevent disruptive behaviors and promote a positive school climate, employing strategies that can be consistently used by all staff. It emphasizes staff and students working together to alter school climate. Available research cited by Rivara et al. finds that PBIS has positive effects on bullying, violence, school climate, and substance abuse.

> **Bystander training** focuses on changing the behavior of bystanders. Several studies found that bystander-involved models were generally effective at reducing bullying, although they did not signal an improvement in bystander empathy for those who were bullied. There were some promising findings regarding a few peer-led educational models, demonstrating some success in reducing bullying, sexual harassment, and dating violence.

> **Other promising approaches:** The report also examined programs that promote equity in sexual and racial minorities, such as gay–straight alliances and the use of restorative practices. Gay–straight alliances are described as an important buffer for LGBTQ youth that may contribute to shifting norms regarding stereotype-driven targeting of such youth. The report says there is not yet enough research to confirm the effectiveness of restorative practices on preventing bullying and providing more equitable disciplinary practices.

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[1] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2016). *Preventing bullying through science, policy, and practice.* Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.17226/23482. Download the full report for free by clicking "Download Free PDF."

Resources for Building a Positive School Climate

National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments offers considerable resources on school climate.

> Topic search from https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/ and search by topic.
>
> Assessing and improving school climate at https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/safe-and-healthy-students/school-climate.
>
> Social and emotional learning (SEL), considered critical to promoting safety within schools:
>
> - https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/safety/emotional-safety.
> - https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/hot-topics/social-emotional-learning.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) provides *Social and Emotional Learning and Bullying Prevention*, a free guide at https://casel.org/bullying/.

Office of Special Education Programs at the U.S. Department of Education provides a website dedicated to PBIS at http://www.pbis.org/.

Center for Safe Schools provides a free white paper, *Integrating Bullying Prevention and Restorative Practices in Schools*, addressing the integration of two common approaches at http://www.safeschools.info/content/BPRPWhitePaper2014.pdf.

Resources for Creating an Inclusive Atmosphere in the Classroom

Anti-Defamation League offers resources for the classroom, including a curriculum guide for Grades 2–5 on addressing identity-based bullying. Download it for free at https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/education-outreach/identity-based-bullying.pdf.

National Education Association has information on teaching about race and ethnicity in the classroom at http://www.nea.org/tools/30417.htm.

Making Caring Common Project at the Harvard Graduate School of Education provides access to a variety of resources on race, culture, and ethnicity at http://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/files/gse-mcc/files/race_culture_and_ethnicity_resource_list_0_0.pdf?m=1448057129.

Human Rights Campaign provides helpful resources and checklists:

> *Resources for an LGBTQ-Inclusive School* are available at http://www.welcomingschools.org/resources/school-tips/lgbtq-inclusive-schools-what/.
>
> *A Checklist for a Welcoming and Inclusive School Environment* is available in English and Spanish at http://www.welcomingschools.org/pages/checklist-for-a-welcoming-and-inclusive-school-environment/.

Gay, Lesbian & Straight Network (GLSEN) provides an elementary school toolkit—*Ready, Set, Respect!*—for free at https://www.glsen.org/readysetrespect.

Summary

Bullying Prevention Summary

Bullying behavior may include:

- *Verbal—saying or writing mean things*
- *Social—hurting someone's reputation or relationships*
- *Physical—hurting a person's body*
- *Damage to property*

If you suspect a student is the recipient of bullying behavior:

Level 1: You are concerned but have no direct evidence of bullying.

- Make a mental note of what, specifically, is causing your concern.
- Make a point to connect with the student for whom you have concern. Use the student's name when you talk with him or her.
- Monitor the situation. Ask trusted colleagues who know the student if they have any concerns for him or her.

Level 2: You are concerned based on second-hand reports of bullying.

- Thank the student or colleague sharing the information. Let this individual know you take it seriously.
- Establish a follow-up time to check in again regarding the stated concerns. Make good on the agreement.
- Monitor how things are going with the student of concern. Document changes in behavior or performance.
- Discuss concerns with student support personnel if the issue persists or escalates.

Level 3: You witness mild to moderate bullying behavior.

- Stop the bullying on the spot.
- Find out what happened.
- Support all students involved.
- Document and report according to school policy and procedure.
- Support students involved in an ongoing way.

Level 4: You witness severe bullying behavior.

- Do whatever is possible to separate students involved while keeping yourself and others safe.
- Seek help if needed, especially if a weapon is involved.
- Engage in de-escalation techniques* as described in bullying prevention training.
- Document and report according to school policy and procedure.
- Support students involved in an ongoing way.

Remember the three key components of effective de-escalation techniques. (Periodically review Handout 6 from Module 1 of Creating a Safe and Respectful Environment in Our Nation's Classrooms to keep the details of these steps fresh in your mind.)

1. Maintain control of yourself and your emotions.
2. Communicate effectively nonverbally.
3. Engage in a de-escalation discussion.

> **REMEMBER: Always follow your school's established policy and procedures for addressing bullying behavior!**

Building Positive Classroom Climate Summary

Remember these 10 things identified by students as behaviors they prefer in adults' approach to teasing and bullying:

1. Take the issue of name-calling and teasing seriously.
2. Let students know that you are available to talk to them.
3. Take time to listen.
4. Don't harp on what should have been done in the past; focus on the present.
5. Be a role model.
6. Do not belittle, tear down, or publicly embarrass students.
7. Help students learn how to act as effective allies.
8. Acknowledge when name-calling and bullying are occurring and that being the target of these incidents can be painful.
9. Be proactive.
10. Be discreet, and, whenever possible, maintain confidentiality.

Find regular opportunities to intentionally build the three features of positive classroom climate:

Engagement	Safety	Environment
Be a role model.	Intervene.	Walk your talk.
Be proactive.	Make a safe, bully-free culture the norm.	Set a positive tone in your classroom.
Be available.	Encourage students to do what they love.	Examine your own beliefs.
Listen.	Keep communication open.	Treat students fairly.
Be positive.	Stay on top of things.	Establish a culture of respect for differences.
Have fun.	Use positive terms.	Engage parents and youth.
Teach more inclusively.	Teach positive relationship skills.	Create a safe environment.

Sources:

Anti-Defamation League. (2018). *Ten things students wish teachers knew about name-calling and bullying.* New York, NY: Author. Retrieved from https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/ten-things-students-wish-teachers-knew-about-name-calling.

Gladden, R. M., Vivolo-Kantor, A. M., Hamburger, M. E., & Lumpkin, C.D. (2014). *Bullying surveillance among youths: Uniform definitions for public health and recommended data elements, version 1.0.* Atlanta, GA; National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/bullying-definitions-final-a.pdf.

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"Walking the Talk" Makes a Difference in Bullying Prevention (Hirschstein et al., 2007)

Welcoming Schools: A Project of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation (http://www.welcomingschools.org/)