

# Let's Talk About It: Becoming the Solution: How Can Parents Tap the Upstander in All Children?



Parent Education Bullying Prevention  
Discussion Series | Oct. 25th, 2023

# Discussion Agreements

**In order for this to be a safe environment to share our thoughts, feelings, and insights, we agree to:**

- Share the air space
- Listen thoughtfully and assume positive intent
- Maintain confidentiality if asked to by another parent
- Engage in self-reflection

## Who's Here?

Please share your name, ages of your children, and one thing you hope to walk away knowing more about this evening.

# What we hope you take away from this evening:

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- Knowledge of how the digital world has influenced children's behavior
- An understanding of the difference between being a bystander and an upstander
- Ideas for how students can be upstanders both online and offline

# What is an Upstander?

An Upstander is someone who takes action when they witness bullying. Even one person's support can make a big difference for someone who is being bullied. When young people who are bullied are defended and supported by their peers, they are less anxious and depressed than those who are not.

# Video Introduction



## Video Clip Follow Up

Students are often a part of group chats online that can quickly turn into bullying. What rules, safety and/or recommendations on how to engage in a positive and safe way on social media and other technological platforms have you shared with your child?

# Video Clip Follow Up Suggestions

## **Model and talk about safe, respectful online behavior**

Enforce strict guidelines around usage

- no screens at mealtimes
- when in face-to-face conversation
- no screens in bedrooms at night
- total screen breaks to do other things (read, walk, play sport / instrument)



# Parent Watch Fors (students being impacted by witnessing bullying)

- unexpectedly stops using their devices
- appears nervous or jumpy when using their device(s)
- appears uneasy about going to school or to other events where their peers are
- appears to be angry, depressed, or frustrated after texting, using social media, or gaming
- is oversleeping or not sleeping enough
- becomes abnormally withdrawn from family or friends
- shows an increase or decrease in eating
- seems regularly depressed
- makes passing statements about suicide or the meaninglessness of life
- loses interest in the things that mattered most to them
- avoids discussions about what they are doing online
- frequently calls/texts from school requesting to go home ill
- desires to spend much more time with parents rather than peers
- becomes unusually secretive, especially when it comes to online activities

# Video Clip: Upstanders



## Video Clip Follow Up Discussion

What are some ways your own children have been an 'upstander' either online and offline? What can make it more challenging for them to stand up to bullies? If your child's best friend was doing the bullying, what might you advise your child to do?

# Strategies for Being An Upstander

## **Do not participate:**

- Encourage children not to “like,” share, or comment on information that has been posted about someone, and do not forward a hurtful text to others. Not participating may limit the potential damage of the messages – to others and to themselves.

# Strategies for Being An Upstander

## **Do not retaliate or respond negatively:**

- If a child feels that they must respond, encourage a calm, clear, and constructive response. Angry and aggressive reactions can make a bad situation worse.
- Encourage children (and adults!) to step away from the device so they do not resort to blaming, shaming, or retaliation. This provides time to get calm and centered so they can create a response that makes it clear that others' digital behaviors are hurtful and language.

# Strategies for Being An Upstander

## **Respond privately to the person who created the hurtful message:**

- If they feel safe doing so, it may be helpful to follow up with the person who created or shared the hurtful message privately, either online, in a phone call, or in person.
- Doing so can make it clear they do not support the negative actions. It also provides an opportunity to authentically share concerns about the behavior and what might be behind it.

# Strategies for Being An Upstander

## **Follow up with the person who was targeted:**

- By reaching out, a child can send a powerful message that they care about the person and they do not support the negative behaviors.
- If needed, this connection can also provide an opportunity to assist the person in finding help related to the cyberbullying situation.

# Supporting Your Children with Upstander Language

## **When you see someone else going through a hard time**

Acknowledge when you see someone struggling and reach out.

- “Hey, I’m around if you ever want to talk. No pressure though—just know that I’m here if you need me.”
- “Great to see you! How’ve you been doing?”
- “I’m always happy to talk about anything, anytime.”

## **When someone tells you what they're going through**

Validation is key. Being heard is important.

- “Gosh, I can’t imagine.”
- “That sounds like a lot.”
- “That makes sense.”
- “Thanks for opening up to me!”



# Scenario Discussion

Lindsay has just moved to town from Oregon and enrolls in the local middle school. Very pretty, outgoing, and funny, she quickly wins the attention of a number of the school's football players—much to the distress of the school's cheerleaders. Bonnie, the head cheerleader, is concerned about Lindsay stealing away her boyfriend Johnny, the quarterback. With the help of her cheerleader friends, Bonnie decides to create a “We Hate Lindsay” Instagram account, where girls can post comments as to why they hate Lindsay and why they think she should move back to Oregon. Soon, the entire school becomes aware of the site's web address, and many others begin to post hurtful sentiments about Lindsay. Desperately wanting to make friends in a new town, Lindsay is crushed and begins to suffer from depression and a lack of desire to do anything aside from crying in bed.

**If your child came home and told you about a “We Hate Lindsay” instagram account that they were not posting comments on but knew about, what would be your next steps?**

## Final Thoughts

What were your biggest takeaways after watching The Upstanders and from the discussion this evening?

# Let's Keep Talking About It...

**Wednesday, Nov. 1st** – *Kind Relationships: How Can Parents Support their Children in Caring for Themselves and Others Every Day?*

**Location:** Virtual via Zoom

**Time:** 6pm to no later than 7pm

# Thank You



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