

Addressing Bullying Behavior through the Six Pillars

Overview

The Six Pillars of Character offer a great framework to explore the ways in which bullying behaviors conflict with good character. This exercise will help students identify troublesome behaviors and utilize critical thinking to determine which Pillar they should emphasize to eliminate it.

Materials:

1. Copies of “Addressing Bullying Behaviors through the Six pillars” handout for class.
 2. Answer key for “Addressing Bullying Behaviors through the Six Pillars.”
- Addressing Bullying Behaviors through the Six Pillars
 - Addressing Bullying Behaviors through the Six Pillars Answer Key

Handout:

- [Coping With Violence \(Secondary\)](#)

Procedure:

This lesson provides an opportunity to further explore both bullying behaviors and the Six Pillars of Character. Not only do students gain an understanding of common behaviors defined as “bullying,” but also explore the characteristics of the Six Pillars.

1. Ask the class what kind of behaviors they see or are aware of that might be considered “bullying.” List these behaviors on the board.
2. When a variety of types has been collected, break students into groups of 2-4 and pass out the “Addressing Bullying Behaviors through the Six Pillars” worksheet.
3. Ask students to classify the behaviors by the Pillar they go against. For example, gossiping about a good friend clearly violates trust.
4. When the student groups have assigned all of the behaviors, have them report out. While several of these behaviors violate the principles of more than one Pillar, the answer key offers the rationale for the proper designation of the behaviors. If students disagree,

generates an excellent opportunity to discuss and define the core values represented in the Pillar. If the class has brought up behaviors that are not incorporated in those described, that is also an opportunity to expand the conversation.

5. To conclude the activity, ask students to brainstorm about ways they could change their behavior or make someone who has been at the receiving end of them feel better. How can they use the Six Pillars as they go through the school day to help lessen bullying? How can they encourage each other to model the Pillars?

This lesson is part of a regular feature in Josephson Institute's monthly e-newsletter, the Chronicle. To subscribe, visit the CHARACTER COUNTS! website:

<http://www.charactercounts.org/chronicle/>

McREL standards

Life Skills

Standard 2. Understands and applies basic principles of logic and reasoning.

Level III Benchmark 3. Understands that when people have rules that always hold for a given situation and good information about the situation, then logic can help them figure out what is true about the situation.

<http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/>

Addressing Bullying Behaviors through the Six Pillars

One of the many advantages to having a CC! program in place at your school is that it provides a foundation to address many of the bullying behaviors that are so common in the ways that youth interact with one another. In a school or program setting, this exercise can clearly identify the disjuncture between good character and bullying behaviors.

Directions: Select a behavior from the box below and write it under the Pillar by which you might most effectively discuss it.

Name calling	Students denied access/afraid to use facilities
Gossiping	Social exclusion
Hitting	Taking/destroying property
Intimidation	Pretending to be someone else online
Rude gestures	Posting embarrassing photos online
Spitting	Knowing bullying is going on and saying nothing
Unkind texts	Pretending to be someone's friend to set him/her up

Trustworthiness

Respect

Responsibility

Fairness

Caring

Citizenship

Addressing Bullying Behaviors through the Six Pillars Answer Key and Rationale

Trustworthiness

Pretending to be someone's friend to set him/her up

Posting embarrassing photos online

Pretending to be someone else online

Gossiping

Members of a community must be able to depend upon and trust one another. All of these behaviors involve abusing trust, which erodes institutional climate. Many of these behaviors involve active deception, making Trustworthiness the ideal Pillar through which to address them.

Trustworthiness is also a key component in creating a Culture of Caring. Bullies depend on silence and inaction, so students need to show trustworthiness by reporting bullying. To come forward as victims or witnesses, they must be able to trust the adults in authority. Like students, parents and teachers must be trustworthy in their reporting and able to trust those in authority to handle the problem effectively and protect those involved.

Respect

Name calling

Rude gestures

Taking/destroying property

Respect means dealing peacefully with others, considering their feelings, and accepting their differences. All of these behaviors degrade the target, illustrating a lack of respect. Non-verbal behavior, such as eyeball rolling, is also inherently disrespectful, and students must find more appropriate ways to disagree or express concern about another's behavior. Sometimes respectful behavior involves speaking up (i.e. a classmate routinely being picked on), and at other times it involves remaining silent (someone whose conduct is "annoying" and does not meet your personal standards). You can help students determine when remaining silent is the best option.

Responsibility

Knowing bullying is going on and saying nothing

We all have a responsibility to create a school climate where all students can thrive. Participating in bullying or allowing it to be part of the school experience represents a failure to attend to this fundamental duty. Students also have the responsibility to create a school climate of caring. Even those not directly involved in incidents have a responsibility to make their classmates feel safe, which means reporting incidents is essential.

Responsibility in this context also means making school/program policies known, creating clear standards for bullying behavior, reporting bullying (or suspected bullying), and ensuring that all incidents are thoroughly investigated and effectively handled. These steps actively show