

# Main Activity: Being an Upstander

“Raise your hand if you have ever witnessed someone else being bullied or treated unkindly by other people.” (IMPORTANT: Remind students not to use anyone’s name in order to respect privacy.)

Pair students and ask them to respond to the following:

- “Think of one of those times you saw someone being treated this way. What did it feel like to witness someone being treated that way?”
- “How did you respond when you saw that happen?”
- “How did you feel about your response?”
- “Would you do the same thing again?”

## **Have a few volunteers share their responses.**

Explain that you are going to turn your attention to what we can do when we see, or witness someone being treated unkindly.

“Sometime when a person witnesses something happen, we say that the person was a “bystander,” which can mean that the person is “standing by” or not taking any action.”

It could be argued that the person stays on the Outer Edge if they choose not to act, or that by not acting, they are implicitly supporting the bullying, and they move into the Inner Circle. There’s not a “right” answer, but it’s a good question to spark dialogue.

“You may think the person who is bullying has all the power, but witnesses or bystanders have tremendous power, especially if they work together and support each other. The more people who make the choice to help, the greater the chance the bullying will stop.”

Write “Upstander” at the top of a piece of chart paper. Write the following definition: Someone who takes action or stands up for someone when he or she witnesses someone being bullied or being treated unkindly or when he or she is being bullied or treated unkindly.

IMPORTANT: Emphasize to students that if they see someone being hurt physically or see an interaction that might escalate into physical violence, they should not confront the bully. Rather, they should quickly go and get help from an adult. Discuss with students signs that might indicate such a physical threat (very angry voices, someone crying, the aggressor being in someone’s personal space, threats being made.) As mentioned above, students should report any incidences they believe to be bullying to an adult. Note that students will confuse conflicts and bullying as they continue to learn. You will hear many reports of bullying that are not, in fact, bullying. Praise the child who comes to you for caring and for trying to help.

NOTE: You may want to go over Telling vs. Tattling: Telling is trying to help someone, tattling is trying to get someone in trouble.

Brainstorm as a group some things you can do when you see someone being hurt or bullied or you are being hurt or bullied.

Record children's ideas on the chart under your "Upstander" definition using two columns:

1) ideas that mean confronting the person who is bullying

2) ideas that do not involve confrontation. Some possible suggestions include:

- Refuse to join in (doesn't involve confrontation).
- Report bullying you know about or see to an adult (doesn't involve confrontation).
- Invite the person being hurt to join your group (might involve confrontation).
- Speak out using an "I" message. Say, "I don't like it when you treat him like that."
- "I want you to stop calling him that name." "I'm going to tell a teacher right now."

(Does involve confrontation.)

Be a friend to the person who has been bullied by showing him you care about him:

- Put an arm around him, give him a put-up, etc. (doesn't involve confrontation).

Distract the bully with a joke or something else so she stops the behaviour (does involve confrontation).

Now tell students they will do an activity where they will practice responding to bullying or unkindness with assertive (strong, but not mean) messages.

Get students to share their stories on Instagram, tagging #HCNZ #Upstander, take photos of students with signs saying #Upstander and tagging us in.

Send their stories to [education@holocaustcentre.org.nz](mailto:education@holocaustcentre.org.nz) names will be changed and used in the Upstander campaign.

I'm an Upstander what DO you stand up  
for?