



CLASSROOM ACTIVITY 2.4 | Bullying & Teasing

GRADES
4–5

Timing

45 minutes

Materials

- Copy of the school's bullying policy and/or other documents related to bullying—one for electronic display or one printed per pair
- **Plus, Minus, Interesting** student handout—one per student
- Craft sticks with student names written on them—one per student
- Chart paper or poster board—one per class
- **Bullying Policy Reflection** student handout—one half sheet per student

Note: *There are facilitation options below if the students are in a virtual situation. Handouts can be provided electronically to be printed at home or as an editable Microsoft Word template to be submitted via email, learning management systems, or a live/shared document.*

Tools to Build Body Confidence

BULLYING IN OUR SCHOOL: WHAT CAN WE DO?

Overview

Content for the *Amazing Me* program was created in partnership with Dr. Marisol Perez, a clinical psychologist and researcher at Arizona State University and The Institute for Research and Education Advancing Children's Health (REACH). Dr. Perez has dedicated her career to assisting future generations be less focused on appearance and more focused on respecting, liking, and appreciating their bodies.

In this activity, students will discuss their school's bullying policy and make suggestions for revisions. With the teacher's support, they will then revise the policy to include weight-based bullying and teasing.

Each activity is part of a five-lesson series that focuses on the effects of bullying and teasing on body confidence. Lessons 1–3 include core content and should be completed in sequence. Lessons 4–5 are supplementary and provide students with an opportunity to extend their learning of core concepts.

Background

Body image is defined as the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors towards one's own body.¹ Research shows that body dissatisfaction contributes to the development of unhealthy behaviors in kids and adults. People are more likely to do unhealthy things to control their weight and body shape when they focus more on appearance than body functionality.² Many things can affect body image, including weight-based bullying and teasing. When students get bullied or teased, it can damage their self-esteem and lead to serious negative outcomes. Research shows that children who are

¹ Cash & Prunzinsky, 1990

² Thompson & Stice, 2001

bullied are at increased risk of suicidal ideation and attempts.³ Children who are bullied are more likely to have unhealthy coping behaviors,⁴ and skip school.⁵ In addition, children who are bullied engage in more unhealthy eating and dieting.⁶ These consequences are not limited to childhood: weight-based bullying is also associated with poor body image and unhealthy eating in adulthood.⁷

A review of existing school bullying programs revealed that none of them address weight-based bullying and teasing.⁸ There are several school bullying programs that have a [BluePrint](https://www.blueprintsprograms.org) (<https://www.blueprintsprograms.org>) Designation (consistently demonstrated to reduce bullying in students and schools). These programs focus on the following dissonance-based, teacher-led activities: classroom discussion on bullying and why it is bad, rules against bullying and why they are important, activities to reinforce anti-bullying norms and values, and what to do when bullying occurs.

This lesson will focus on school bullying policies and give students the opportunity to revise their classroom's bullying protocol.

Objectives

Students will:

- Discuss how bullying and teasing based on appearance/weight affects body confidence.
- Examine their school's bullying policy.
- Suggest changes to their school's policy to make it more inclusive and effective.

Essential Question

What are the bullying policies at our school, and how can they be updated to be more inclusive and effective?



³ Eisenberg, Neumark-Sztainer, & Story, 2003

⁴ Puhl & Luedicke, 2012

⁵ Puhl & Luedicke, 2012

⁶ Hayden-Wade, Stein, Ghaderi, Sabinski, & Wilfey, 2005; Neumark-Sztainer, Falkner, Story, Perry, Hannan, & Mulert, 2002

⁷ Puhl, Wall, Chen, Austin, Eisenberg, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2017

⁸ Aime et al., 2017

Teacher Preparation

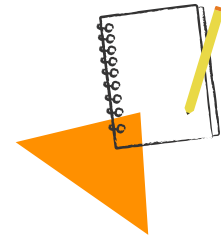
Before the students arrive:

- Prepare your school's bullying policy and any available bullying report forms and provide to students.
 - Note that this lesson will vary greatly depending on each school's bullying policy, how comprehensive it is, and how much information students have regarding the policy. This lesson aims to have students discover that weight-based bullying and teasing may not be included in the school's bullying policy. Guide the discussion in this direction if students do not come to this conclusion on their own.



Suggestions for Implementing Virtual Virtual Meetings

- **Lighting:** Backlighting prevents your audience from seeing you clearly. Make sure that you have lighting in front of you to ensure that you are seen.
- **Camera Placement:** Try to make sure that your camera is placed at eye level. This helps to create eye contact and engagement with your audience. You can use books or other items to lift your computer (if using a laptop).
- **Sound:** Make sure that you do a quick sound check before beginning your session. Ensure that you can be heard and that participants will not hear an echo effect. Consider the usage of headphones equipped with a speaker.
- **Make Connections:** Remember to try to connect with your audience, which can be challenging, virtually. Connect with them using quick stories or humor. Some suggestions have been included.
- **Troubleshooting:** It is okay to make mistakes or have technology issues. If you have a technology hiccup or things don't go as planned, do your best to reconnect and move forward with your lesson. The best thing you can do is be prepared by testing your internet connection and sound and video settings prior to your session!



Sensitivity Note

Due to the nature of today's discussion, be aware of student feelings and sensitive to the emotions and reactions of all students in the classroom. There can be a diversity of emotions and reactions to these topics. Teachers should feel free to paraphrase/edit the language to suit their classes learning abilities.



Procedure

Discuss

- Arrange students in pairs and project the following questions on the board:
 - How do you think bullying-based on appearance is related to body confidence?
 - What are the bullying policies at our school?
 - What steps should you take if you are being bullied? What steps should you take if you see someone else being bullied?
- Provide time for students to talk over the discussion questions with their partners before asking for volunteers to share with the group.
- Explain that today the class will be investigating the bullying policies at their school making suggestions on how it can be more inclusive and effective.

Do

- Project the school's bullying policy and procedures for handling bullying. Read through with students, stopping to clarify when needed.
- Direct attention to the one **Plus, Minus, Interesting** handout.
- Provide approximately ten minutes for students to analyze the document and identify positive aspects of the school's bullying policy, aspects of the school's bullying policy that could be improved, and interesting things about the school's bullying policy. They should record their thoughts as they go through it.
- Choose student names at random using popsicle sticks to ask students to share their ideas from their **Plus, Minus, Interesting** handouts. Guide students in drawing conclusions about what might

VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

- Allow them to share their answers out loud or encourage students to write their answers down to reference later, add to a live/shared document, or comment in a chat box.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

- This can be facilitated in a live/shared document or submitted electronically.

be missing from the policy to make it fully inclusive and effective, with an emphasis on weight-based issues.

- Challenge students to brainstorm ways to prevent weight-based bullying and support peers if they feel they are being bullied.
- Guide students through the process of creating a “Classroom Bullying Policy” that reflects the ideas gleaned from the Plus, Minus, Interesting activity. Record student responses as they brainstorm their ideas on chart paper or a poster board.
- Discuss how students in the class will keep each other accountable for adhering to the new “Classroom Bullying Policy” (e.g., What will this look like? How will we know this is working? Who can we rely on to keep us on track?)

Reflect

- Distribute one **Bullying Policy Reflection** handout to each student and provide time for students to reflect on their learning.
- If time allows, invite 2–3 volunteers to share their responses.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

- This can be facilitated in a live/shared document or projected via screenshare.

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Plus, Minus, Interesting

STUDENT HANDOUT

PLUS What do you like about our school's bullying policy?	MINUS How can the school's bullying policy be better?	INTERESTING What are some things you found interesting?
Example: You are helping a student when you report it.	Example: More examples of bullying.	Example: The whole school is doing it.



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Bullying Policy Reflection

STUDENT HANDOUT

How can we add weight-based bullying to our policy?



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