

Prevention Activities

AIM: The activities in this module are designed to enhance students' awareness of assertiveness skills and to provide an opportunity for students to rehearse these skills. Improving students pro social behaviour by being assertive not only reduces the potential opportunities to be bullied or to be a bully, it also enhances the social skill set of the student for lifelong effective functioning in all aspects of their social life as they grow and mature.

Level A – Prep to Grade 3

Are you as tiny as a mouse or as tall as a giraffe?

This activity is a drama activity. Students select an animal that they consider to be small and weak, an animal that is big and strong and an animal that is loud and cranky. Students act out and verbalise prescribed words according to the strength and weakness of the animal they are portraying. The activity allows students the practical and experiential means of expressing themselves through passive, aggressive and assertive behaviour and then comparing each emotion accordingly as experienced and acted out.

Aim for the stars

This activity is more for the younger students of this age level. The students colour a star shape then complete a physical activity and a speaking activity. As a step to increase confidence, students are to speak in front of the whole class.

Students are then rewarded with a gold star on completion of these activities to add to their star shape. The overall aim of the activity is to provide students with a preliminary awareness of being assertive.

Level B – Grade 4 to Grade 6/7

Nursery rhymes are powerful

This activity makes use of old fashioned nursery rhymes as a script for students to recite in three different styles - shy, cranky and confident. Students experience delivering and receiving messages (nursery rhymes) to gain an understanding of the difference between all three styles. The aim of the activity is to: assist potential targeted students in speaking up for themselves; having potential bullies experience negative, aggressive speech and behaviour from another and provide potential bystanders with the confidence to speak up.

Belly Watchers

This activity is conducted with the entire class and will need a large area for the students to walk around in a circle. Students compare two different communication styles – a timid style (belly watchers) with an assertive style. Students exhibit the two different styles, comparing the verbal and physical behaviours of each style as they walk around in a large circle. This is then followed by a short discussion about how the students felt about each style. Students are encouraged to adopt a more assertive behaviour by being observant of what is going on in the playground and speaking up when they see something that is not right.

Prevention Activities

Level C – Grade 6/7 to Grade 9

Stand up for yourself

This activity helps students explore how they treat themselves in comparison to how they treat others. The activity helps students to stand up for themselves and assert their own needs. Students complete a questionnaire pertaining to their friends then repeat the same questionnaire for themselves. The repetition of the questionnaire opens up the student's awareness of self assertiveness.

Practice makes perfect

This activity uses dice to demonstrate, when undertaking a new skill it is not always achieved on the first try. In small group work, students throw a dice a number of times and record the frequency of the numbers thrown. The activity also highlights that in demonstrating new skills, failures are required before total successes can be fully achieved. Overall this activity provides students with positive reinforcement to encourage persistence when undertaking a new skill such as being assertiveness.

Level D – Grade 10 to Grade 12

Dealer's Choice

This exercise uses the maturity of the older students as a component of assertiveness in itself. The students devise posters to be displayed around the school which inform the younger grades of what to do and say in an assertive manner if they are in a bullying situation. By older students completing this task, it reinforces to the student community that from within their own ranks, bullying is not acceptable behaviour.

Positions vacant

This activity consists of two parts. The first part of the activity makes use of an employment advertisement. The students devise an advertisement for the job of an effective and assertive bystander. Students identify through the construction of the advertisement, assertive skills required to reduce bullying. This activity is conducted in small groups. For the second part of the activity, students gain an experiential lesson on assertiveness by having to confidently inform the interview panel (the small groups) they have the necessary skills to be assertive and get the job.

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Material Required

Paints, paintbrushes, marker pens, large sheets of paper or rubber back curtain backing

Step One

Inform the students that as senior leaders of the school, they possess the knowledge and skills from all their schooling years to provide positive strength messages to the younger students of the school. These messages will be depicted in a large poster format which will be displayed around the school.

Step Two

For group one, ask the students what they understand about the meaning of assertiveness. Have the students write this down on a sheet of paper. Ask the group to state what would a targeted student say and do in a bullying incident if they made a choice to become assertive. Have the students write this down on a piece of paper. For example:

- Use body language that is calm, aware, and confident.
- Make eye contact. When you want people to listen to you, it usually works best to look into their eyes without staring rudely and without looking away.
- Have a facial expression that is consistent with the message you are verbally giving. This means having a neutral face if you are;
- telling someone to stop or a friendly face if you are asking someone to do something for you. Move closer to someone who you want something from.
- Using polite language that is both definite and respectful, such as, "Excuse me!" "Please stop!" "I need your help!" "I'd like to sit here too." "I'd like to join the game." Try some humour to defuse the situation.

Step Three

Provide students with art material so they can create a poster which depicts the way an assertive student deals with bullying. Have the students think of a saying and a theme for the poster for example: Dealer's Choice-deal with bullying by changing the game plan.

Step Four

Have the groups present and explain their posters to the class. Once completed students then hang the posters in highly trafficked areas around the school.

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Material Required

Selections of pages from job advertisements, poster sheets of paper for each student group, pens

Step One

Present to students a number of job advertisements from the paper. Then have students break into groups of 3 to 4 and disseminate the employment advertisements among the smaller groups.

Step Two

In regards to bullying incidents, ask students their thoughts about bystanders and whether or not they should always intervene? Ask if they think bystanders lack assertiveness skills when they do not intervene. What assertiveness skills should a bystander possess?

Ask each group to devise an advertisement for employing an effective and assertive bystander. Students should complete this on large sheets of paper which later will be displayed around the classroom or other school areas.

Step Three

Students need to consider the actual job description. They will need to state clearly what skills a bystander requires to effectively carry out their employment. Students are to be encouraged to be as creative as possible in the design of the employment advertisement.

Step Four

Once the posters are complete, ask the small groups to be an interview panel for the employment of the bystander. One student in each group will need to be the person seeking the position. Give students five to ten minutes for the panel to think of what questions to ask the potential employee and for the potential employee to think of some examples which would show that they are the right person for the position.