

**Social and Emotional Learning in the Time of Distance Learning: An Online Resource for Educators Concerned About Children's Coping Skills**

**Lesson # 12**

**The Power of Respect and Understanding to Stop Bullying**

*(Narration appears in italics throughout this lesson.)*

*Always begin your class meeting with a Check-In.*

*A check in is a very important part of each session/lesson/meeting. "Checking in" with each other involves naming and acknowledging feelings, and is a great way to connect members of the group with each other, creating a sense of community. Checking In allows students to pause at the beginning of a session and, by naming their feelings, free up cognitive processing power for engagement in the session. Research has suggested that the check-in activity builds empathy among group members and strengthens group connections. Students are permitted to pass. If time is a problem, hand signals can be used by students to participate in the check in (thumb up, thumb horizontal, or thumb down).*

*TODAY'S CHECK-IN: Have the students take out their journals and tell them that you are going to tell them a story. Tell them that you will pause several times while telling the story and ask students to write down how they are feeling. Each time, have students locate in their bodies where they are feeling the feeling. (Remind them of the BMH exercise)*

*Here is an story of a fictional village meeting out their system of social justice:*

*In this village, when a person acts irresponsibly or unjustly, he is placed in the center of the village, alone and unfettered (Pause)*

*All work ceases, and every man, woman and child in the village gathers in a large circle around the accused individual. (Pause)*

*Then each person speaks to the accused, one at a time. (Pause)*

*Each person recalls the good things the person in the center of the circle has done in his/her lifetime. (Pause)*

*All of the positive attributes, good deeds, strengths, and kindnesses are recited carefully and at length to the accused person. (Pause)*

*When the ceremony is finished, the tribal circle is broken, a joyous celebration takes place, and the person is symbolically and literally welcomed back into the tribe. (Pause)*

**Debrief:** Discuss the feelings students had after each pause and help them connect their thoughts to their feelings. Do this at the end of the story, giving students time to process their thoughts and feelings.

**Mini-Lesson:** *Bullying is an adverse childhood experience; we must learn to embrace, rather than make fun of others who are different.*

*Ending bullying is the responsibility of everyone in the school community, particularly the adults. Adults should refrain from blaming children who are being bullied by only teaching or focusing on techniques designed to strengthen victims.*

*“Ignore the bully;”*

*“Stand up for yourself;”*

*“Tell them to stop;” or*

*“Walk away,”*

*although good skills for anyone to learn, are skills that most kids who are bullied have mastered, but that don't work, particularly on their own or without the support of adults. Bullying behavior can only be stopped by teaching all kids to recognize their own and others' emotions; developing techniques for managing conflict and relationships; and working together to solve problems. Adults must be a part of the anti-bullying, skill learning team, and the whole community must support these strategies.*

*( Here is a story from my experience:*

*One of the most successful programs I administered was a mediation program where the mediators were not in the same school as the students who reported a conflict. High School students mediated Middle School problems, and Middle School students, in turn, learned to mediate for elementary school students. This whole-school approach provided older mentors, skills acquisition in EQ and conflict resolution, and a clear path for students to take in solving their problems. Ending bullying in a school is the responsibility of the whole school; bullying should be swiftly, but kindly, shut down wherever it has begun; students should be given an opportunity to voice their concerns, knowing they will be heard and they will have solid support working toward a solution. )*

*We need to change the way we teach kids about bullying. As a whole-school approach, we must teach emotional intelligence skills like the ones we have learned in these lessons: recognizing emotions, becoming aware of the effect of our patterns of behavior, pausing and*

*listening to the message of our emotions before acting, conflict resolution (Use nice words; Use a calm voice; No put-downs, and No mean Comments). If children learn to stop, watch their words, and listen carefully to others, they will learn to work together to find a solution other than bullying.*

**Have the class watch this Positive Footprints Video created by an elementary school in California.**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1F2dn2\\_c0U4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1F2dn2_c0U4)

### **ACTIVITY: Create a Positive Footprints Program in your school**

*Following the conclusion of the video, talk with the students about the Positive Footprint Program. Have students trace their feet, cut out their footprints, decide on positive remarks to write on their footprint, and put the footprints around the school.*

*You might also consider holding an assembly to discuss the program. Here are some additional suggestions:*

- 1. Starting with the oldest grade in your school, have the students mentor a younger group to complete this program. Continue until the whole school has participated.*
- 2. You might consider making the footprints an art project and making them out of a more permanent material.*
- 3. Involving the whole school provides support for the program, gives the students a way to talk to each other about bullying, and teaches older students to mentor younger students. All of these activities increase engagement, build empathy, and allow students to take ownership of their actions, making good choices and carrying them out with each other.*