

The Bully Zones Project

Purpose: Reflect on inclusion and exclusion in your school community and explore how students at one school took action to educate each other about bullying and create more inclusive spaces.

ADVISOR NOTES:

1. Choosing Materials for This Activity

This activity is designed to help advisees think about and respond to the video **Bully Zones**, available at facinghistory.org/advisory-media. If you have time in this meeting or a future meeting and would like to read another example of how two Canadian students chose to be upstanders when they learned about a freshman who was bullied for what he wore to school, read the reading **Bullying at School** and choose one or more discussion questions.

2. Find Additional Resources to Combat Bullying and Intolerance

For additional resources, such as lesson plans and videos, to help inspire your group to be upstanders when they witness bullying or intolerance, explore the “Not in Our School” program at niot.org.

PROCEDURE:

1. Reflect on Inclusion and Exclusion in Your School

- Ask advisees to respond to the following question in their journals. Let them know that they will be sharing their ideas with their peers.

What do inclusion and exclusion look like at your school?

- Have advisees debrief in pairs or triads and then as a group. Create a T-chart on the board or chart paper and make a list of their ideas for what inclusion and exclusion look like at your school.

2. Learn How Students at One School Raised Awareness about Bullying

- Let your group know that they will be watching a short video called “Bully Zones.” Ask them to predict what they think it might be about, based on this activity’s journal prompt and the video’s title.
- Then play the video **Bully Zones** (08:08) at facinghistory.org/advisory-media.

APPROXIMATE TIME:
30 minutes

MATERIALS:

VIDEO

Bully Zones

(see facinghistory.org/advisory-media)

READING

Bullying at School
(optional)

- In small groups or in a circle discussion, discuss the following questions:
 - What lessons can you learn from this video?
 - What questions does this video raise for you?
 - What might a Bully Zones project look like at your school?
 - Is bullying an accepted behavior in your school? Is being an upstander an accepted behavior? What steps can a community take to change its social norms (the behavior and language that a community considers acceptable)?
 - What strategies does your school use to address bullying? Which strategies are most effective? Which are least effective? What do you do in your school to help combat bullying? In what areas do you need more support from your peers, teachers, parents, or administrators?



Bullying at School

A bullying incident in school is often the first time a teenager is confronted with the decision of whether to be an upstander or a bystander. In a world full of injustice, suffering, and other social problems, the choice to participate can actually originate very close to home.

The following stories highlight the power of students to make positive change by taking seemingly small actions in response to bullying in their own school communities.

In Canada, two students responded this way when a classmate was taunted because of what he wore:

Two Nova Scotia students are being praised across North America for the way they turned the tide against the bullies who picked on a fellow student for wearing pink.

The victim — a Grade 9 boy at Central Kings Rural High School in the small community of Cambridge — wore a pink polo shirt on his first day of school.

Bullies harassed the boy, called him a homosexual for wearing pink and threatened to beat him up, students said.

Two Grade 12 students — David Shepherd and Travis Price — heard the news and decided to take action.

"I just figured enough was enough," said Shepherd.

They went to a nearby discount store and bought 50 pink shirts, including tank tops, to wear to school the next day.

Then the two went online to e-mail classmates to get them on board with their anti-bullying cause that they dubbed a "sea of pink."

But a tsunami of support poured in the next day.

Not only were dozens of students outfitted with the discount tees, but hundreds of students showed up wearing their own pink clothes, some head-to-toe.

When the bullied student, who has never been identified, walked into school to see his fellow students decked out in pink, some of his classmates said it was a powerful moment. He may have even blushed a little.

"Definitely it looked like there was a big weight lifted off his shoulders. He went from looking right depressed to being as happy as can be," said Shepherd.

And there's been nary a peep from the bullies since, which Shepherd says just goes to show what a little activism will do.

"If you can get more people against them . . . to show that we're not going to put up with it and support each other, then they're not as big as a group as they think they are," he says.¹

¹ "Bullied student tickled pink by schoolmates' T-shirt campaign," CBC News Canada, last modified September 18, 2007, accessed July 12, 2016.