

Do we have alternatives?

“We worry about what a child will be tomorrow, yet we forget that he is someone today.” Stacia Tauscher

Themes	Peace and Violence, Children, Discrimination and Xenophobia
Complexity	Level 3
Group size	9 - 24
Time	90 minutes
Overview	This is a role-play activity that addresses issues of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interpersonal violence ▪ Bullying
Related rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The right to live in freedom and safety (security) ▪ The right to dignity and not to be discriminated against ▪ Children have the right to be protected and shielded from harmful acts and practices e.g. from physical and mental abuse
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To develop knowledge and understanding about the causes and consequences of bullying ▪ To explore ways of confronting the problem ▪ To create empathy with the victims of bullying
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Copies of the scenes to be role-played (one scene per group) ▪ One copy of the sheet of “bullying stories”
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare the room so that the participants have space to perform their role-plays.

Instructions

1. Introduce the activity. Explain that they are going to work in small groups to make short role-plays on the theme of bullying.
2. Ensure, with a quick brainstorm, if necessary, that everyone knows what bullying is and that it can happen in any school or college, in clubs and in the workplace.
3. Divide the participants into three sub-groups and assign one of the scenes to each group. Give them 15 minutes to rehearse and prepare their role-plays.
4. Once they are ready, ask each group, in turn, to present their scene.
5. Leave any comments until all groups have presented their scenes and then come together into plenary for discussion.

Debriefing and evaluation

Start by reviewing the role-plays.

- Where did the groups get the material to develop their scenes? Was it from stories or films about bullying, or was it based on experience?

THEMES



PEACE AND VIOLENCE



CHILDREN



DISCRIMINATION

COMPLEXITY



LEVEL 3

GROUP SIZE



9-24

TIME



90 MINUTES

Key date

4 June

International day of
Innocent Children
Victims of Aggression

- Were the scenes realistic?
- In scene 1, which things that people said were constructive and helped the situation and which things hindered the situation?
- In relation to scene 2, how easy is it to talk frankly with a friend who is also a bully. In general, what techniques would tend to have a positive effect and what tactics would tend to have a negative effect?
- In relation to scene 3, how easy is it to talk frankly with a friend who is being bullied? What is the best way to find solutions that are acceptable to the victim?

Now ask three participants to read out the three “bullying stories”. Ask for general comments about the “real stories” and then go on to talk about the causes of bullying and how it can be tackled.

- How do you think it feels to be bullied?
- Is the person being bullied responsible for it?
- Are bullies trying to prove something by abusing other people?
- Is bullying a form of violence?
- Is bullying about power?
- Is bullying inevitable?
- If you are friends with someone who is being bullied, should you inform an authority figure, even though your friend told you about their problem in confidence?
- What are the most common prejudices against people who are being bullied?
- Who is responsible for controlling a problem of bullying?

Tips for facilitators

Bullying may be direct or indirect. Direct bullying means behaviour such as name-calling, teasing, pushing or pulling someone about, hitting or attacking, taking bags and other possessions and throwing them around, forcing someone to hand over money or possessions, and attacking or threatening someone because of their religion, colour, disability or habit. Indirect bullying is behaviour such as spreading rumours with the intention that the victim will become socially isolated. Such behaviours are mostly initiated by one or more people against a specific victim or victims. In both direct and indirect bullying, the basic component is physical or psychological intimidation which occurs systematically over time and creates an on-going pattern of harassment and abuse.

If you are working with an outreach group or in a club, college or workplace you may want to adapt the scenes to suit your particular situation. Be aware of the young people in your group and any personal experiences of bullying. Form the groups and share out the scenes accordingly.

Suggestions for follow-up

Find out if there are any programmes locally that train peer educators (young volunteers) in conflict mediation. Ask a speaker to come to talk to the group and consider the possibility of setting up a system of peer mediators in your school, college or club.

The group may like to develop an anti-bullying policy for their school or organisation. The method described in the activity “Responding to racism”, on page 201, on how to develop an anti-racist policy is also appropriate for developing an anti-bullying policy.

If the group enjoys role-playing and would like to explore issues of conflict resolution further, they could do the activity “Play the game!”, on page 194.

Ideas for action

Find a group or association that works to address bullying in your country, and offer your support. If you have a particularly creative group, suggest they script their own scenes and then perform them for others.

Members of the group could also lead or organise a debate in their own schools or communities on the topic of bullying.

Together with other friends, create a group in your own school or community to help young people who are being bullied.

HANDOUTS

Scenes for the role-plays

Scene 1

A student turns to people in authority and tries to explain that one of his/her classmates is being bullied. The headteacher is authoritarian and traditional. S/he thinks standards are slipping and has poor opinions about the general behaviour of young people these days. The class teacher does not want to assume responsibility for the situation. Other teachers underestimate the problem and do not recognise the bullies' behaviour for what it is. The representative of the local authority care service is concerned, but has too heavy a workload to be able to intervene now.

Scene 2

A group of students try to talk to a friend who is bullying a younger student.

Scene 3

Various students are gathered together talking about a friend who is being bullied by a group of older students. They would like to help their friend and analyse all the possible solutions to help him/her.

Real stories

Story 1

"I am 12 and I hate going to school because nobody likes me. There is a group of kids who call me names every time they can. They say that I am ugly and fat and that my parents should be ashamed of me. My best friend stopped talking to me and now she has even made friends with some of the kids in this group. I hate her. I feel so lonely and I am scared that what they say about my parents is true."

Rosanna

Story 2

"I started classes in a new college this year and from the first day I felt that some of the girls looked at me funny. Then I realized that they were jealous because most of the boys started being very friendly to me. Now I want to go to another college because I am receiving little notes threatening me. I also receive abusive phone calls at home. They have even stolen my books several times. Last week, I went to the toilet and three girls followed me inside. They shouted at me, threatened me with a knife and told me that I should go study elsewhere and called me a whore. I cannot stand this any more. I am scared and angry. I tried to talk to the principal but she did not really listen to my problem. I don't know what to do."

Lisbeth

Story 3

"My best friend told me other students were bothering him at our school. Since I wanted to help him, I decided to go and talk to them but after I did this they started doing the same to me. Now we are both being bullied: they make fun of us, play dirty tricks and have threatened to beat us up. We have both decided to keep our mouths shut because we are scared things will get worse if we tell someone."

Andrey