



EMBRACE CIVILITY

AN EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS

Embrace Civility in the Digital Age

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INTRODUCTION

EMBRACE CIVILITY PROGRAM

The *Embrace Civility* program focuses on promoting and strengthening positive relations. *Embrace Civility* is about creating a positive school culture where every student is treated with kindness and respect. This program can be used from 4th grade to high school. The depth to which students engage in the topics will differ based on their grade level.

Embrace Civility empowers students with the insight, values, and skills to:

- Effectively step in to help if they witness hurtful behavior by reaching out to the one who was treated badly, telling the one being hurtful to stop, or reporting serious concerns.
- Stop themselves from being hurtful and make things right if they have been.
- Be self-confident and respond in a powerfully positive manner if someone is hurtful to them.

CORE SKILLS

Embrace Civility teaches insight and skills in five core areas:

POSITIVELY POWERFUL STRATEGIES

Reach Out

- ✓ I will reach out to be kind to those who have been treated badly or left out.
- ✓ I will help others think things through or resolve conflict.

Say “Stop”

- ✓ If it is safe, I will publicly tell someone being hurtful to stop.
- ✓ I will help someone who was hurtful stop, own it, and fix it.

Report Concerns

- ✓ If it is a serious situation, I will tell an adult who can help.

Stop, Own It, and Fix It

- ✓ I will always remember that my choices show who I truly am.
- ✓ I will stop myself and make things right if I have been hurtful.

Be Positively Powerful

- ✓ If someone is hurtful, I will respond in a powerfully positive way.
- ✓ I will focus on the good and make a positive difference.

COMPANION PROGRAM

Embrace Civility is considered a companion program to *Empower Students to Embrace Civility*.

Empower Students to Embrace Civility provides instructional resources to increase staff skills in responding to hurtful incidents they witness or are reported to them.

These hurtful incidents often occur in situations where staff members have other important responsibilities. The response must fit the reality of these situations. Also, the staff perception of what has happened often does not reflect the reality of the actual situation. Staff must ask questions of all participants to determine what has actually happened, how serious this is, and how to proceed.

Staff members must determine whether this is an incident that can be easily resolved or evidence of a Tier II situation that should be referred to a Designated Staff Person. The determination of when situations are referred to a Designated Staff Person will vary by school.

Staff intervention should promote student empowerment and resolution of the hurtful incident. The staff member should monitor and continue to ask questions of all involved students to make sure the incident was resolved.

Empower Students to Embrace Civility also provides guidance to support the investigation of more serious or chronic situations in a comprehensive manner and to implement a restorative intervention that provides necessary support for any involved student and ensures accountability.

The student who was treated badly or a student with challenges who was hurtful likely requires a Positive Action

Plan. For the student who was hurtful, an Accountability Process will help this student honestly accept personal accountability. After a serious reflection and problem solving, this student would enter into an Accountability Agreement. If any of the students also require Tier III interventions, these would be in addition to these supportive and restorative intervention components.

After this intervention plan has been developed, it is critically important for the principal and other staff supporters of the involved students to remain engaged—monitoring the situation until it is clear that the intervention efforts were effective.

Further, if any aspects of the overall school environment appear to be implicated and may be supporting or encouraging hurtful behavior by the involved student or others, it is necessary that the school climate leadership team assess and correct this hostile environment.

Empower Students to Embrace Civility is available from Embrace Civility in the Digital Age.

CURRICULUM STANDARDS

The Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (HECAT) is an assessment tool developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in partnership with health education experts representing state education agencies, school districts, schools, colleges, and national organizations.¹

The 2012 HECAT for Violence Prevention Curriculum provides this definition:

*Violence is defined as any threat or actual use of force or power against oneself (self-inflicted injury or suicide), against another person, or against a group that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, psychological harm, abnormal growth or development, deprivation, or death.*²

While *Embrace Civility* does not choose to use the term “violence” in the description or objectives, these are the curriculum objectives that are most relevant. The Health Behavior Outcomes (HBO) should enable students to:

- HBO 1. Manage interpersonal conflict in nonviolent ways.
- HBO 2. Manage emotional distress in nonviolent ways.
- HBO 3. Avoid bullying, being a bystander to bullying, or being a victim of bullying.
- HBO 4. Avoid engaging in violence, including sexual harassment, coercion, exploitation, physical fighting, and rape.
- HBO 5. Avoid situations where violence is likely to occur.

- HBO 6. Avoid associating with others who are involved in or who encourage violence or criminal activity.
- HBO 7. Get help to prevent or stop violence including harassment, abuse, bullying, hazing, fighting, and hate crimes.
- HBO 8. Get help to prevent or stop inappropriate touching.
- HBO 9. Get help to stop being subjected to violence or physical abuse.
- HBO 10. Get help for oneself or others who are in danger of hurting themselves.³

The *Embrace Civility* lessons directly address the individual Knowledge and Student Skills expectations in the HECAT violence prevention.

INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH

An effort has been made to allow for flexibility in the use of the resources of this program. It is envisioned that the *Embrace Civility* program would be used as a school-wide program. Alternatively, this could be implemented by one or several teachers in the school.

There are seven groups of lessons contained in *Embrace Civility*. However, within each group lesson, there are multiple smaller lessons, each one of which could be a short lesson and discussion in and of itself.

It is presumed that most middle and high schools have implemented an approach that engages students in homerooms or advisories. Sometimes, these homerooms or advisories may include students in only one grade. In other schools, these groups may be multi-grade.

Homerooms or advisories are most often the place where the school addresses issues that relate to the school climate and personal relations. Therefore, it is assumed that in a school-wide implementation of this program, the more in-depth discussions about the issues addressed in *Embrace Civility* would occur in these environments. Alternatively, the lessons could be integrated into health sciences curriculum. It is assumed that most elementary students have a primary teacher who would provide the lessons.

Ideally, an approach will be implemented that engages a Student Leadership Team to be actively involved in this program. Guidance on strategies to establish a Student Leadership Team is provided below.

Ideally, the student members of the Student Leadership Team would ultimately become involved in the delivery of lessons. It is likely that the approach to using students to provide instruction to peers will need to be done in a developmental manner.

Alternatively, staff may remain primarily responsible for the delivery of instruction and the Student Leadership Team can be involved in additional Expansion Activities. Expansion Activities are discussed below.

Schools may want to initiate the implementation of **Embrace Civility** in a student assembly format. However, it is essential to realize that one-shot assemblies will not result in a positive change in student behavior.

If the introduction is done in an assembly, it is recommended that the assembly focus on the information presented in Lessons 1 and 2 and strongly focus on the insight that has come from the student survey. It should be indicated to the students that they will be learning more about the **Embrace Civility** approach in their classroom environments. A demonstration slideshow has been provided.

Depending on the degree to which students have been involved in leadership and peer instruction activities, the implementation approach in individual schools can vary. Variations on the implementation approach include:

- Initial primary presentation of the student survey data and introduction of all of the Embrace Civility lessons by a ...
 - Staff member.
 - Group of student from the Student Leadership Team.
 - Group of middle school students presenting at their former elementary school.
- With follow-up presentation and discussion of lessons in classrooms, homerooms, or advisories where ...
 - The teacher presents the information and actively engages students in discussion.
 - The teacher asks a group of students in the class to present the information and engage students in discussion.
 - Older group of students comes to a class and presents information and leads discussion.
 - Trained members of a Student Leadership Team come to the class and present the information and lead the discussion.

One developmental approach that may be effective is for the first year a school staff member delivers the initial presentation (Lessons 1 and 2) in an assembly. This is followed by teachers presenting the lessons in their homerooms. A **Student Leadership Team** could be initiated and the students in this team could be engaged in **Expansion Activities** and undertake a study of the material presented in the **Fostering Positive Relations** chapter and slideshow. The following year, members of the **Student**

Leadership Team could provide the leadership for the assembly and could provide assistance in homeroom or advisory classes in the delivery of the instruction.

STUDENT SURVEY

The **Embrace Civility** Student Survey is a powerful tool in this program. There are two versions of this survey. One is designed to be online. The other is a shorter paper form that could be used in a class. Use of the online version is highly recommended, especially if this program is implemented in a school wide manner.

As is evident in the survey language itself, students should be given the option of deciding whether or not they will complete the survey. If an online version of the survey is used, notice should be sent home to parents informing them of the survey and giving them the opportunity to opt their child out.

It is not necessary, and at the elementary school level not advisable, to use all of the survey questions that have been provided. These are provided as options. At the elementary school level, even if the survey is delivered online, it would likely be better to just use the questions that are set forth for the paper version and to reduce some of the answer options. Some of the questions may be asked at the 8th grade level that are not asked at the 6th grade level.

The creator of this program found that Survey Monkey was a very easy tool to use. Survey Monkey was very helpful in creating charts demonstrating the data, as well as Word Graphs.

The online version of the survey asks these kinds of questions:

- Questions about overall school climate.
- Questions about students' perspectives about hurtful behavior and the role of witnesses.
- Several questions about incident rates of hurtful behavior. This includes questions about how frequently in the last month students witnessed someone being hurtful, were hurtful, and had someone be hurtful to them.
- For those who experienced someone being hurtful to them, questions related to staff responsiveness and reporting. Note that in question 2 there are more general responses related to the effectiveness of staff in helping things get better. In questions 13 through 17 there are more specific questions. Either or both of these questions can be selected for use.
- Questions that relate to how students think they would respond to a hurtful incident as a witness, how they did respond to a recent incident, and any barriers.

- A question asking students for their insight on the effectiveness of a range of responses if someone is hurtful.

There are two reasons for the online survey:

- To obtain social norms data and insight from students related to strategies that can be integrated into the instruction. On the survey, these questions are identified as Student Instruction (SI).
- For evaluation purposes. As this program is used over the years, the school will be able to assess effectiveness by looking at the data. These questions are identified as Assessment and Evaluation (AE).

For the shorter paper version of the survey, all of the questions that require a written response have been removed so that students can not be identified based on recognition of their hand writing. Also, questions related to involvement as one who was targeted or one who was hurtful, as well as questions related to staff-student relations and staff effectiveness in responding, have been removed.

The paper survey should be completed by the students, folded into quarters, shuffled, and a copy provided back to each student. In learning activities, students would be instructed to respond as the person who completed the survey, not their own opinion.

What will be discovered, especially if the online survey is used, is that there is an incredible level of student interest in THEIR own data. Students will be very interested in what the data says about how they think and act.

Over time, the incident numbers should improve. This would mean a decrease in hurtful incidents and an increase in students stepping in to help, stopping themselves and making things right, and asserting themselves effectively if someone is hurtful. It will be hard to track this with the paper survey. Also, the perceived effectiveness of staff interventions when hurtful incidents are witnessed or reported should improve.

For schools that use the online survey, it can be completed every year. Schools can then make new slides for a slideshow presentation to demonstrate progress and identify concerns.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS

On the online survey, questions 3 and 4 are for assessment of current staff-student relations. The data from these questions should not be shared with students, but should be shared with school staff.

The responses to these questions must be further analyzed in association with questions that indicate increased risk: being bullied and engaging in bullying. It may be

appropriate to hold focus groups with students to gain further insight.

Assuming this data demonstrates the need to improve on these measures, the data should be presented to all school staff. Staff should be directed to engage in a problem-solving process—to Think Things Through.

The goal should be an increase in positive relations between staff and students, especially students who face greater challenges. Staff should identify school wide and personal strategies to improve on these measures, as well as the professional development and support they may need to accomplish this—knowing that the effectiveness of their efforts will be measured.

The responses to questions 5-18 on the online survey are also important from an assessment and evaluation perspective. It is especially important to assess the combination of the data on questions 11 and 12. What percentage of your students are being treated badly once a week or more, who find it very difficult or they feel powerless to get this to stop? These are your students who are at higher risk.

The responses to the questions 13-17 are very important from the perspective of how well staff are responding and whether students trust that staff will respond. It is important to analyze the responses on these questions based on those students who are at higher risk and those who are not.

Addressing any concerns of staff responses when these incidents are witnessed or reported, especially for the students who are at higher risk, will be very important. *Empower Students to Embrace Civility* is focused on this.

The responses on question 18 are very important to analyze. If students who are in classes protected under state or federal civil rights laws are being frequently treated badly, this is evidence of a hostile environment that must be corrected. Failure to do so could lead to agency intervention or litigation. Insight into this is provided in *Empower Students to Embrace Civility*.

A subsequent analysis of changes on these questions will provide the ability for schools to assess progress both on the empowerment of students and the quality of the engagement between staff and students on these concerns.

STUDENT GUIDE AND THINK THINGS THROUGH

The **Student Guide** is 6 pages and contains the insight for the lessons provided. This is provided as a reproducible handout.

Think Things Through is an additional instructional document that requires the student to write reflections about the lessons. Teachers could manage the **Think**

Things Through document in different ways. This document could be turned in as an assignment. Alternatively, this document could be folded and sealed, with students' names on the outside. Then on a monthly basis, the document could be provided back to the students to allow them to review what they have written, reflect on their recent experiences, and to identify new goals or objectives for their personal behavior.

EXPANSION ACTIVITIES

Expanding on these lessons throughout the school year will be important. These are activities that should be under the direct control of the **Student Leadership Team**.

- **Posters, Screen Savers, or Bookmarks.** The **Student Leadership Team** could hold a poster, screen-saver, or book-mark contest for the entire student body. Items that illustrate positive student norms and values and effective skills are ideal.
- **T-shirt.** The Student Leadership Team could host a competition for a t-shirt design for students to promote their commitment to kindness.
- **Daily or Weekly Announcements.** Several members of the **Student Leadership Team** make a daily or weekly public school announcement related to **Embrace Civility**.

- Here is an example of what a member of the Embrace Civility Student Leadership could say:

“Hi. I am ___ a member of the Embrace Civility Student Leadership Team. Here is your quote of the day:

If I can help somebody as I pass along, if I can cheer somebody with a word or song, if I can show somebody he's traveling wrong, then my living will not be in vain. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Please take a moment today to reach out to be kind or help someone decide on a positive path. And remember to say think you to someone who reaches out to be kind to you.

We are having a meeting of the Embrace Civility Student Leadership Team ____. Remember, membership on this Team is open to anyone who makes a commitment to be kind and respectful and who wants to help our school community live by these values.

- **Video.** Students could create an **Embrace Civility** video to share what the school is doing.
- **Random Acts of Kindness Campaign.** Obtain a 10 gallon water container with a narrow opening. Place this in a public place in the school. Encourage each

student to bring at least 5 pennies to school each day (provide extra pennies in the office). During the day, they can reach out to be kind to another person, preferably someone outside their social group or someone who appears to be struggling. Each time they reach out to be kind, they place a penny in the container. At the end of each month, the proceeds are sent to a local non-profit.

- **Wall of Thanks.** Create a bulletin board area in the school as a Wall of Thanks. Provide ample “sticky notes” nearby and pens. Encourage everyone in the school community—students, staff, and parents—to regularly write personal messages of gratitude to others or for anything they are personally thankful for.
 - To expand on this activity, members of the Student Leadership Team could pick out a few messages each day to read over the intercom in the morning. Instruct them to specifically pick out messages of gratitude sent to students who are known to have greater challenges.
- **School Board and Other Presentations.** The Student Leadership Team could make a presentation on their findings and efforts to the School Board and to other community organizations. (Hint: community organizations may be a source of funding for some projects that require funding.)
- **Flash Dance.** If you have not seen this video, watching it is a must: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MhYyAa0VnyY>. In honor of International Anti-Bullying Day, two schools in Vancouver came together to create a message about Acceptance and challenge others to use social media as a positive tool.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

There are a number of excellent sites online that have wonderful ideas, programs, or resources that could be integrated into school activities, especially students in older grades. Among the best are:

- **Teaching Tolerance Resources.** Southern Poverty Law Clinic's excellent Teaching Tolerance program has a wealth insight and resources for activities that can easily be student led.⁴ The resources on this site can be used to expand on the **Embrace Civility** lessons in older grades.
- **Beyond Differences.** A great organization, Beyond Differences, promotes a number of wonderful activities to help students engage in social inclusion.⁵
- **One and All.** One and All is a site established by Harvard Graduate School of Education that focuses on Strategies to Protect Students, Reject Bullying, and Build Communities Where Everyone Thrives.⁶

IDENTIFYING STUDENT LEADERS

Schools that seek to implement a program that involved students as leaders are immediately confronted with a dilemma: Given that the primary source of hurtful behavior in schools is from those students who seek social dominance and are considered by their peers to be “popular” and that staff likely view these students as “leaders,” how can a school set up a Student Leadership Team that avoids the selection of students who have been hurtful?

Here is a story that may help your understanding:

I once had a conversation with a high school student who was being chronically bullied. This very delightful and competent young woman had diabetes 1. In fact, she almost died when she was 4 years old. She was slightly over weight. Much of the bullying she suffered was based on this.

Every year, this young woman had applied to be in a student leadership class that was coordinated by the high school assistant principal, who was also the athletic director. Every year she was not selected for this group. The students who were selected were the popular athletes—who had, for years, been bullying her.

It is possible that in any selection of student leaders, some of those selected have engaged in hurtful behavior to achieve dominance. Their involvement in fostering positive relations could be very beneficial in reducing any further hurtful behavior of theirs, as well as that of others within their social group.

However, it should be clearly understood that students, especially those who have been treated badly, will know if students who are selected for the Student Leadership Team have a history of being hurtful. If this occurs, the Student Leadership Team and all related activities will be viewed as having limited to no credibility because this will be considered evidence that the school staff do not really understand what is happening when their backs are turned.

The following are some examples of how peer leadership programs have selected student leaders. Size of group should not be a limiting factor.

ROOTS

The *Roots* intervention was implemented by a team of researchers from Princeton, Rutgers University and Yale University in 56 New Jersey middle schools.⁷ These researchers engaged groups of students who they deemed to be influential to spread messages about the dangers of bullying and school conflict. The selected students were encouraged to discuss in their own voices positive ways to foster more positive relations.

The researchers tested whether certain students, who they label “social referents” or social influencers, had increased

influence over school climate and the social norms and behavioral patterns in their schools.

The researchers sought to identify the students who were most influential in their smaller peer groups. There was a specific intent not to ask adults to select the students or to identify students based on “popularity.”

To identify the “social referents,” the researchers used a survey measurement known as social network mapping. The researchers distributed a survey to the students that asked them to nominate the top 10 students at their school who they chose to spend time with, either in or outside of school, or face to face or online. Using these data, the researchers then mapped each school's social networks.

After identifying these students, the activities were designed to test whether by engaging these students in leadership in the creation and dissemination of messaging, this could shape their peers' behaviors and the social norms within the school. The students were encouraged to create their own messaging.

In the course of a year, the middle schools that employed social referents saw a 30 percent reduction in student conflict reports. Most significantly, the students who the researchers had identified as being highly connected, social referents were the most effective at influencing social norms and behavior among their network connections and at the school climate level.

SAFE SCHOOLS AMBASSADORS

A similar program is the Safe Schools Ambassador program from Community Matters.⁸ The Safe School Ambassadors program engages and mobilizes socially-influential leaders from the school's diverse student groups. As the web site notes:

These “alpha” leaders are carefully identified through student and staff surveys. They are selected based upon specific criteria, such as: strong position and influence in their peer group, good communication skills, and a history of standing up for friends.

The website does not provide in-depth detail on how student leaders are selected. It suggests that there can be several approaches, involving staff and/or student nomination. The desired profile is:

- *represent the diverse age, ethnic, ability, and “interest” groups on campus*
- *are the “opinion leaders” of these groups, the more outspoken and charismatic students (some of whom attract “negative” attention)⁹*

The recruited students then participate in a two-day interactive training along with several adults who serve as program mentors.

SOURCES OF STRENGTH

Sources of Strength is a suicide prevention program that uses peer leaders.¹⁰ This program uses a staff nomination approach. The following is its guidance on the types of students to be nominated:

Natural Leaders. *Strong PLs are the natural and key leaders among different groups of students in the school. They are students whose ‘voices are heard’ by other students who they affiliate with. They represent a wide variety of social groups, and often have specific influence within smaller groups or cliques. They may be peer helpers, student council members, gang leaders, SADD members, or others. Training other students with ‘leadership potential’ in their social groups is also a good strategy.*

Representing Diverse Social Groups. *It is especially important to identify peers who have influence with diverse types of cliques and groups. They may not be the “high-achievers” or highly engaged students. Some have experienced the effects of suicide on a personal basis; others have been active in previous prevention efforts. Still others have no related experience. Together, they bring a mixture of backgrounds and attitudes to the program. When recruiting your Peer Leader group, ensure that you include students who represent the following:*

- All school grades
- Various gender identities and sexual orientations
- Groups less connected to school
- As many known cliques as possible
- All of the racial and ethnic groups of the school
- Students who spend time with students at risk for drop-out and other behavior problems¹¹

STAND UP ~ CARING MAJORITY

An excellent book for elementary students is *Stand Up*.¹² Dr. Sirus, one of the co-authors of this book utilized a student leadership program called the Caring Majority for years in her elementary school.¹³

To be included in as a student in the Caring Majority, students were required to complete an application identifying why they wanted to participate in this group. Any student who went to the effort of completing an application was accepted.

EMBRACE CIVILITY

It is recommended that all members of the **Student Leadership Team** be required to submit an application. However, staff should strongly encourage certain students to apply to especially make sure this this Team includes

students who have a long standing reputation for being kind and compassionate and reaching out to help others.

The recommended approach to identify students who staff should encourage to apply is:

- Ask school staff to identify students using the criteria provided through the Sources of Strength program, paying particular attention to the selection of student leaders from minority groups.
- Ask students who are in a minority population within your school to identify which students they think would be strong representatives to express concerns that members of their community face. Ask these students to identify those they think should especially apply. **It is essential that the Student Leadership Team include representatives from the diverse student groups within your community, including students with disabilities.**
 - Alternatively, hold focus groups with these students to ask them about their concerns and in the process of these groups, identify the students who appear most articulate and dedicated and viewed as leaders by their peers.

It is suggested that the application form ask questions such as these:

- This student Leadership Team is being established to promote positive relations, kindness, and inclusion for all students at (name of school). Please explain why you want to be a member of this Team.
- Please explain a time when you saw that another student was being excluded or treated badly and you stepped in to help the student being treated badly. How did you step in to help? What did you learn from this?
- Please explain a time when you stepped in to either help resolve a conflict between students or to tell a student who was being hurtful to stop. How did you step in to stop? What did you learn from this?
- Please explain a time when you made a mistake and were hurtful. How did you handle the situation afterwards? What did you learn from this?

Using a combination of this input, identify students to ask to serve on the initial **Student Leadership Team** and approve the applications of those who submitted them.

Schools are advised to allow any interested student to join this **Team**. The bigger the **Team**, the greater the impact. All students who want to join the **Team** should be required to submit an application.

1 <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/hecat/>

2 https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/hecat/pdf/hecat_module_v.pdf.
3 Id.
4 <https://www.tolerance.org>.
5 <http://www.beyondifferences.org/>.
6 <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/17/02/one-and-all>.
7 Paluck, E.L. Shepherd, H. R., and Aronow, P. M. (2016).
Changing climates of conflict: A social network driven experiment in 56 schools. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* and <http://www.betsylevypaluck.com/roots-curriculum/>.
8 <http://community-matters.org/programs-and-services/safe-school-ambassadors>.
9 <http://community-matters.org/programs-and-services/ssa-implementation-FAQs>.
10 <https://sourcesofstrength.org>.
11 <https://sourcesofstrength.org/adult-advisors/assemblingyourteam/>.
12 Roth, L. and Siris, K. (2012) Stand Up. <https://www.amazon.com/Stand-Up-Lisa-Roth-M-D/dp/1475169671>
13 Personal communication with Dr. Siris.

FOSTERING POSITIVE RELATIONS

This section will provide with insight into the research that was relied on to create *Embrace Civility* and how this research has been translated into strategies. A slideshow has been created to accompany this section.

It is recommended that the slideshow be used to provide instruction to student leaders who will be participating in instruction. This slideshow may also be appropriate for instructional use in high school.

SHIFT FROM PREVENTING BULLYING TO EMBRACING CIVILITY

The goal of *Embrace Civility* is to empower students to foster positive relations and an environment where students strive to be kind and inclusive and, if hurtful things do happen, they:

- Step in to help, if they witness a hurtful situation.
- Stop themselves from being hurtful and accept responsibility and remedy the harm if they have been.
- If treated badly, respond in a positive and powerful way.

Hurtful behavior has frequently been called “bullying.” A problem at this time is that the term “bullying” now has too many different meanings. Some people refer to “bullying” any time that someone has been hurtful.

Your district has an anti-bullying policy. The definition of “bullying” in this policy likely addresses more serious behavior. The focus is on whether a student has violated the disciplinary code. The perspective taken in *Embrace Civility* is that it is important to strive to reduce and effectively respond to all forms of hurtful behavior, not just behavior that could be a violation of school policy.

You may also have been taught another definition of bullying. This is from the StopBullying.Gov web site:

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.¹⁴

A concern about this definition is the lack of objectivity. “Real or perceived imbalance of power.” “Repeated or has the potential to be repeated.” Neither of these terms are sufficiently objective. Sometimes there is an obvious imbalance in power between two students. However, at other times this is not so obvious. However, there have been repeated hurtful acts that are causing distress to one or both students.

Embrace Civility Strategy: The focus of *Embrace Civility* is on fostering positive relations—kindness, inclusion, and civility. In other words, the focus is on trying to increase the positive, rather than prevent the negative. While *Embrace Civility* could be called an “anti-bullying” program, please do not refer to it in this way.

FORMS OF HURTFUL BEHAVIOR

In fostering positive relations, it is necessary to seek to prevent and effectively respond to all forms of hurtful behavior. This is because all forms of hurtful behavior can cause distress, disrupt the school environment, and interfere with students’ ability to receive an education. The following are general descriptions of the different forms of hurtful behavior that *Embrace Civility* is designed to reduce:

- **Bullying.** Widespread or repeated hurtful acts that have caused a student to feel distressed and has made it hard for that student to learn or participate at school,
- **Discriminatory Harassment.** Bullying that is based on a student’s sexual orientation or identity, race, national origin, disabilities, or religion or other protected identity.
- **Sexual Harassment or Assault.** Unwelcome sexual comments, gestures, or touching, as well as sexual assault.
- **Disrespect or Denigration.** Using insulting terms or symbols that communicate that a person or group of people is inferior.
- **Relational Aggression.** Damaging someone’s relationships or social status, including excluding others from social activities, damaging someone’s reputation by spreading rumors and gossiping,

humiliating someone in front of others, or withdrawing friendship.

- **Conflict or “Drama.”** Two-way conflict that often involves active supporters. Sometimes, drama situations involve romantic relationships in one way or another.
- **Physical Harm or Threat.** Physical assault, destruction of property, or a threat to do so.
- **Dating Abuse.** Being hurtful, controlling, or abusive to someone within a dating relationship.
- **Retaliation.** When someone who has been treated badly is hurtful in response.
- **Hazing.** Being hurtful to new or younger members of a team or group as a form of initiation.
- **Hurtful by Mistake.** Jokes or pranks that weren’t meant to be hurtful, but were—or impulsive, angry outbursts followed immediately by feeling of remorse.
- **Cyberbullying.** Any of the above acts that take place using digital technologies.

POSITIVE SOCIAL NORMS

An essential focus of *Embrace Civility* is the emphasis of positive social norms. Social norms are unwritten standards or expectations about how people will behave and interact with each other in different environments

Social norms may vary depending on the group or location. For example, the social norms that would guide a decision about how to behave while walking down a hallway in a hospital are different from the social norms governing how members of the soccer team would enter a soccer field.

What are the social norms governing how members of your school community are expected to treat each other? Is it expected that students will treat all other students with kindness and respect? Or is it expected that some students will be frequently disrespected and treated in a hurtful manner and that this is to be expected in your school?

If students believe that the majority of students think it is okay to denigrate some students or engage in other hurtful behavior directed at others some times, then some students will engage in such hurtful behavior.

Note, this is not a discussion of “school rules.” Your district’s rules address not engaging in bullying. While “expectations” expressed by school staff may have some influence on the social norms of a school, if they are adult created and delivered, from the perspective of students, these “expectations” become “rules.” It is for this reason *Embrace Civility* in the Digital Age strongly recommends a collaborative statement of school values.

Embrace Civility Strategy: The focus of *Embrace Civility* is on the expectations of students regarding how they will treat each other when school staff are not watching them.

The *Embrace Civility Student Survey* will demonstrate that the majority of students do not approve of hurtful behavior and admire those who step in to help.

The Youth Health and Safety Project made effective use of a local social norms survey to reduce bullying behavior.¹⁵ This project collected school-based data about students’ perspectives on bullying. Predictably, the vast majority of students indicated they disapproved of this behavior.

This data was then used to create posters that demonstrated the school’s norms related to bullying. The use of messaging incorporated the locally derived positive social norms led to a reduction in the reported bullying incident rate.

When the actual positive social norms, held by the majority of students in your school, are made clear to all students, you can expect that hurtful behavior of students will decrease and the willingness of students to step in to help will increase.

FOUR KEY APPROACHES

There are four key approaches from the field of Positive Psychology that *Embrace Civility* in the Digital Age recommends implementing as a foundational aspect of the *Empower Students to Embrace Civility* approach, the companion program. These four key approaches will support all students, including those who are treated badly, those who are hurtful, and witnesses.

The Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania provides this definition of positive psychology:

*Positive Psychology is the scientific study of the strengths and virtues that enable individuals and communities to thrive. The field is founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play.*¹⁶

MINDFULNESS AND SELF-REGULATION

Often students who are treated badly overreact in response. This can lead to additional hurtful incidents because other students perceive it is funny to watch this student overreact. Sometimes, lack of self-regulation can lead students to retaliate and engage in hurtful behavior.

The practice of mindfulness helps people achieve calmness and focus—to self-regulate.¹⁷ One of the best instructional videos on mindfulness, *Just Breathe*, features kindergarten students explaining the principles and practice.¹⁸

Many schools have begun to implement mindfulness practices and have reported significant effectiveness in improvement of school climate.

Mindful is a non-profit which provides excellent insight into these issues, including research evidence and an electronic newsletter.¹⁹ Mindfulness In Schools and Mindful Schools are programs that support schools in this effort.²⁰

Embrace Civility Strategy: The Be Positively Powerful lesson in *Embrace Civility* encourages students to keep their cool. If students practice mindfulness daily and then a hurtful incident arises, the first thing to do is to breathe and self-regulate. The students have practiced mindfulness, it will be easier to remain calm if treated badly.

However, the apparent positive impact of a school wide approach to engaging students in mindfulness practice suggests that this should be considered as a core component of the overall school activities.

CHARACTER STRENGTHS

The VIA Institute on Character focuses on character strengths identified as being important for success and happiness, noting that everyone has different strengths.²¹

The Positive Psychology Center, noted above, also conducted a study on character strengths and found that intentionally using one of your personal strengths each day also resulted in an increase in happiness.

The character strengths include:

Creativity, curiosity, judgment, love of learning, perspective and wisdom, bravery, perseverance, honesty, zest, love, kindness, social intelligence, teamwork, fairness, leadership, forgiveness, humility, prudence, self-control, appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humor, and spirituality.

The VIA Institute has a free Character Strengths Inventory on its web site that teens can complete.²² A brief version of this Character Strengths Inventory, developed with the permission of the Institute, is provided with this program.²³

Embrace Civility Strategy: The Be Positively Powerful lesson in *Embrace Civility* encourages students to focus on building their strengths and being proud of their accomplishments.

However, in like manner to the mindfulness practices, schools are encouraged to take advantage of the resources on the VIA Institute for Character to launch a school wide focus on building character strengths. Schools are encouraged to focus attention on students' strengths and what they can contribute, rather than on what they lack.

As the VIA strengths survey allows one to identify their own personal strengths. In the context of recognizing that we all have different strengths, this thinking can provide a new way to think about similarities and differences that shifts way from race, religion, gender identity or expression or other "differences."

If all students and staff complete a survey they can all identify their individual strengths. Students and staff could then create a locker sign or other art project that displays their individual strengths.

The VIA Institute also has excellent insight and activities that can be used to increase students' strengths. A school could choose to focus on a specific strength each week. In this way, the focus of all students can be shifted to an exploration and development of their strengths.

PROBLEM SOLVING

When students gain problem-solving skills, they are more resilient in figuring out how to respond if someone has been hurtful to them, if they witness hurtful behavior, or if they have been hurtful and are trying to figure out how they can make things right.²⁴

When students gain interpersonal relationship problem-solving skills—that is learn how to think of their own solutions to problems, consequences to their actions, and how they and others feel about things—they are less likely to engage in risk behavior and are more resilient in figuring out how to respond if someone is hurtful to them.²⁵

Four key interpersonal cognitive problem-solving skills are:

- Means-ends thinking to reach a stated interpersonal goal by planning a step-by-step, sequenced means to reach that goal
- Alternative solution thinking to identify alternative solutions to a stated problem.
- Consequential thinking to consider what might happen in certain situations.
- Weighing pros and cons to decide whether to carry out an interpersonal act.

Students should be encouraged to think about how they can use their personal character strengths when engaging and problem solving and thinking of possible strategies.

An excellent intervention approach for students who have engaged in misbehavior is called Collaborative and Proactive Solutions (or Collaborative Problem Solving). This process also involved steps in problem-solving.²⁶ In *Empower Students to Embrace Civility*, the companion program, educators are encouraged to use this collaborative problem solving approach when guiding a student who has engaged in hurtful behavior.

Embrace Civility Strategy: The key steps *Embrace Civility* teaches to Think Things Through are these:

- What actually happened?
- What do I want to achieve in response?
- What several positive things could I do that use my personal strengths?
- Is each in accord with my values?
- For each, what might happen?
- What is my best first choice?
- What else could I do?
- If this has not worked, I will talk with a friend or a trusted adult.

Embrace Civility Strategy: *Embrace Civility* helps students learn to use these steps for themselves, as well as when seeking to assist others or if they have been hurtful and are trying to figure out what to do.

This approach reminds students that the first step they take may not be effective. This is why it is important to think of several possible strategies. If the second strategy is not effective, this is likely time to talk with a friend or a trusted adult.

BEING KIND TO OTHERS

Being kind to others has many positive benefits.²⁷ The excellent insight on the website of Random Acts of Kindness indicates that research has documented these positive benefits of kindness:

- Kindness is contagious—witnessing kindness leads other people to be kind.
- Witnessing acts of kindness increases hormones that lead to better health, self-esteem, and optimism.
- Being kind helps people feel stronger, more energetic, calmer, less depressed, and leads to increased feelings of self-worth.
- When you are kind to another person, your brain's pleasure and reward centers light up, as if you were the recipient of the good deed.
- Being kind stimulates the production of feel-good and pain killer hormones and lower stress hormones.
- Being kind can significantly increase positive moods, relationship satisfaction and decrease social avoidance in socially anxious individuals.²⁸

One key study in a school demonstrated that students who were instructed to perform three kind acts for others every day experienced significant increases in peer acceptance.²⁹ This insight provides a powerful, and easy to implement approach to increase the peer acceptance of those who are being more frequently treated badly or excluded.

Embrace Civility Strategy: *Embrace Civility* especially encourages students who are being treated badly to focus

on being kind to others. The Reach Out component is also focused on kindness to others.

Setting up school wide activities to encourage acts of kindness would be an excellent activity for the Embrace Civility Student Leadership Team. The Random Acts of Kindness web site has excellent suggestions as do many other sites.

EMPOWERING WITNESSES TO STEP IN TO HELP

Many students would like to help when they see someone being hurtful.³⁰ Bullied students who have supportive friends experience less distress.³¹ When students do intervene, they are often successful in getting the hurtful situations to stop.³² Publicly confronting someone being hurtful does present risks of retaliation or humiliation. However, those who do step in to help are admired by their peers.³³

Unfortunately, when bullying situations do occur, most students do not step in to help.³⁴ The willingness of witnesses to step in to help is influenced by their perception of the social norms of their school, their social status and level of personal power, as well as their knowledge and skills to do so safely and effectively.

THE CHOICE

When young people witness bullying or other hurtful behavior, they have a choice. They can be a:

- **Hurtful Participant** who joins in or supports the harm. Hurtful Participants of those who are marginalized frequently are also “at risk.” Those who participate with one who is socially motivated may perceive their social status to be linked to their “leader.”
- **Passive Observer** who ignores what is happening or walks away. Passive Observers frequently do not have a significantly high level of social status or personal power.
- **Helpful Ally** who steps in to help. Helpful Allies tend to have higher social status and/or personal power, as well as compassion and effective social skills.

Helpful Allies can step in help in a variety of ways:

- **Reach Out.** Reach out to be kind to the person being hurt or left out and help friends resolve conflict.
- **Say, “Stop.”** Publicly or privately tell the person being hurtful to stop.
- **Report Concerns.** Tell an adult who can help.

To increase the willingness of witnesses to step in to help requires addressing:

- **Personal Factors** of motivation, personal power, and self-efficacy.
- **Social and Environmental Factors** of friendships, school climate, and perceived expectations of peers.
- **Perceived Barriers and Rationalizations.**

Embrace Civility Strategy: *Embrace Civility* strongly focuses on increasing positive peer intervention.

PERSONAL FACTORS

MOTIVATION

Motivation to step in to help appears to be grounded in a feeling of personal responsibility for well-being of others, acceptance of differences, empathy and compassion for those who are facing difficulties, and a feeling of personal connection.³⁵

Most students indicate that they do not like to see bullying and express a desire to step in to help. Lack of motivation may not be the most significant determining factor in whether or not students actually do so. More likely, the perception of barriers is involved, which is discussed below.

Embrace Civility Strategy: *Embrace Civility* promotes the values of personal responsibility for well-being of others, acceptance of differences, empathy and compassion, and a feeling of personal connection to the community of others.

To increase students' motivation to step in to help *Embrace Civility* also specifically asks students who see a hurtful situation and want to step in to help, but are afraid to do to think of this:

- How I would feel if someone treated me badly and no one reached out to me?
- How I would feel about myself if I could have reached out to be kind, but didn't?

PERSONAL POWER

The personal power factor relates to comparative social power between the one being hurtful, the one targeted, and the witness.³⁶ There are three concerns:

- If students do not perceive themselves to be as powerful as the student being hurtful, stepping in to help raises the risk of embarrassment or retaliation.
- If students are not as physically strong as the one being hurtful, stepping in to help raises the risk of physical harm.
- Students who become publicly associated with a lower social status student face a risk of embarrassment, teasing, or damage to their reputation.

Embrace Civility Strategy: It is not likely possible to dramatically change the personal power or social status of students. *Embrace Civility* uses a social norms approach to seek to increase the personal power of students who are willing to step in to help by helping them understand that other students admire them for this.

Embrace Civility also presents private strategies that can help avoid direct, public confrontation with the one being hurtful. Using private strategies will reduce the risks associated with lower personal power.

SELF EFFICACY

Self-efficacy includes both effective skills and confidence in those skills.³⁷ Students' level of confidence is likely related to their perception of their level of personal power and/or social status.

Embrace Civility Strategy: A primary objective of *Embrace Civility* is to increase students' understanding of effective skills. *Embrace Civility* strategies to assist students in gaining effective skills to positively intervene that reduce the risks of embarrassment or retaliation include:

- **Think Things Through as a Helpful Ally.** This involved the Think Things Through approach presented above.
- **Private Strategies.** Using private strategies, such as reaching out to be kind, privately telling a friend to stop being hurtful, or reporting to an adult who can help.
- **Safer Strategies.** Using a safer strategy to publicly say, "stop," such as working with others and not turning the situation into a confrontation.

SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

FRIENDSHIPS

Students who witness hurtful behavior may have friendships with either those being hurtful or those targeted.³⁸ As it turns out, these friendships are highly influential in decisions to step in to help.

- Those who are friends of those being treated badly are more likely to reach out to help their friends.
- The friends of those being hurtful are more likely to join in, encourage, or support their hurtful friend.
- Those who are friends with both, may help to resolve or mediate the conflict, or may just do nothing.
- Those who are not friends with either could step in to help, do nothing, or join in the harm, all depending on the personal factors, discussed above.

Embrace Civility Strategy: *Embrace Civility* will:

- Increase students understanding of how to best help friends who are being treated badly or are engaged in conflict.
- Encourage those who are friends with someone who is being hurtful to encourage their friend to stop, own it, and fix it. This is considered a very important strategy.
- Encourage students to help those outside of their friendship circles.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

Every member of the school community—staff, students, and parents—play an important role in encouraging a positive school climate. The school climate must maintain a culture of acceptance and demonstrate a celebration of differences.³⁹

Embrace Civility Strategy:

Members of the **Student Leadership Team** be sure to work as a group to present to school staff and parents their thoughts, and the thoughts of other students, on additional actions that could improve the climate of the school.

Schools should welcome the opportunity to gain insight from members of the **Student Leadership Team** about other aspects of the school climate.

PERCEIVED SOCIAL NORMS

What students think other students think about those who are hurtful, those who support those being hurtful, and those who step in to help is highly influential.⁴⁰

As noted, the social norms theory suggests that people misperceive the attitudes and behaviors of others and this influences their own actions. When people learn about the actual positive norms of their peer group, they are more willing to abide by those norms.

Whether someone intervenes is ... influenced by the extent to which they feel that others in their immediate environment share their concerns and will support their efforts.⁴¹

Ensuring students have an accurate understanding of students' disapproval of hurtful behavior and admiration of those who step in to help is imperative.

Embrace Civility Strategy: Many of the activities in **Embrace Civility** are designed to increase students' understanding of the actual norms held by their peers—disapproval of hurtful behavior and admiration of those who step in to help.

The **Embrace Civility Student Survey**, which provides the data that is presented in the slideshow and on posters, is the primary way this is accomplished.

PERCEIVED BARRIERS AND RATIONALIZATIONS

The key barriers students will likely identify to stepping in to help on the **Embrace Civility Survey** include:

- Not knowing what they could do.
- It was not their business.
- They could fail and embarrass themselves.
- Other students might tease them if they tried to help.
- School staff is supposed to handle this.

When a student sees a hurtful situation, wants to step in to help, but does nothing, that student will likely rationalize why he or she did not step in to help. As noted, the rationalizations are:

- **Spin It.** "It was just a joke."
- **Deny Personal Responsibility.** "Someone else should have done something."
- **Deny the Harm.** "It was not that bad."
- **Blame the Victim.** "He or she probably deserved it."

Embrace Civility Strategy: To address these barriers, **Embrace Civility** seeks to ensure students know of effective ways to help that they can use more privately to reduce the potential of failure or embarrassment.

Additionally, the focus on the positive norms held by the majority of students that disapprove of hurtful behavior and admiration of those who step in to help can undermine these perceived barriers.

HOLOCAUST RESCUERS

Fascinating insight can be derived from studies of people who acted to rescue the Jews during the Holocaust. Eva Fogelman, daughter of a survivor, conducted interviews with such rescuers and found four very common attributes:⁴²

- They had well-developed inner values, acceptance of differences, and a strong belief that individual action mattered.
- They came from loving homes, where parents used reasoned discipline rather than punishment. They had an altruistic caregiver who modeled compassionate values and frequently had suffered a loss in their own family that had given rise to increased sympathy for others.
- They had a strong sense of self-competency and in their ability to find creative solutions to the very difficult situations.

- There were enabling situations that occurred that helped to support their efforts. This included a support network of like-minded rescuers.

This is the kind of environment and values staff and the **Student Leadership Team** can encourage.

EMPOWERING THOSE WHO ARE HURTFUL TO STOP, OWN IT AND FIX IT

MARGINALIZED OR SOCIALLY DOMINANT

Too often, the public perception of those who engage in bullying is that they are marginalized, “at risk” students.⁴³ These are the common words or phrases to describe those who engage in bullying:

Are aggressive or easily frustrated. Have less parental involvement or having issues at home. Think badly of others. Have difficulty following rules. View violence in a positive way. Have friends who bully others⁴⁴

There are likely some students at your school who are hurtful who fit this description. Almost always, these are students who have experienced trauma or have other challenges and who feel as though they have been denigrated and excluded by other students.⁴⁵

These students require more intensive interventions to address the harms caused to them. Within most schools the concerns of these students will be addressed in accord with the Multiple Tier System of Supports (MTSS) at a Tier II or III level.

However, these students are not the primary source of hurtful behavior in your school.⁴⁶ More recent research has demonstrated that the primary source of hurtful behavior is students are socially skilled, powerful and popular who seek dominance by denigrating others who they consider “deviant” or engaging in battles with rivals or those perceived to be rivals.⁴⁷

Here are some words and phrases that describe students who are now recognized to be the primary source of hurtful behavior in schools:

High-status. Popular. Socially skilled. Considered “cool.” Leaders. Wield considerable power. Attractive. Good athletes. Highly competent. Considerable power. Use aggression to achieve and maintain their positions as leaders.⁴⁸

One researcher identified that students who were named by peers as the “coolest” were also often named the most hurtful and the ones engaging in spreading of rumors.⁴⁹

In addition to specific actions to denigrate and exclude those students who are “different,” it appears that students who are perceived to be rivals are frequently targeted.⁵⁰ If one is seeking to demonstrate their power and establish dominance, engaging in a show of denigration of someone who is at a similar level of social power appears to be an effective strategy.

The identification of these students as “cool” appears to be an assessment of the personal power and social status of these students in the eyes of other students. But students do not personally like to see bullying or hurtful behavior and do not admire those who are hurtful.⁵¹ Thus, there is a significant misperception of the actual norms.

In schools where denigrating others is an effective way to be considered to be considered “cool” and “popular” there is generally a high level of hurtful behavior. In schools where those who are kind and compassionate are considered the true leaders, the level of hurtful behavior is significantly lower.

To stop this kind of hurtful behavior requires changing students understanding of the actual norms held by the majority of students. In this way, the path to high social status can be that of being known as a kind and compassionate student who steps in to help others.

Embrace Civility Strategy: Students who are serving on the **Student Leadership Team** should be identified as having chosen a path of true leadership and have made a commitment to being kind and compassionate and stepping in to help others. Ideally, the number of students who make this commitment will grow.

Embrace Civility specifically addressed students who are hurtful in this manner in the *Embrace Civility Student Survey* and addressed this in Stop, Own It, and Fix It.

IMPULSIVE RETALIATION

In a national implementation of an earlier version of the *Embrace Civility Student Survey* when students who reported they had been hurtful were asked what they were thinking, the two top responses were:

- I acted too fast when I was angry.
- This person had been hurtful to me.

While these two responses were separate, the concepts likely are combined: quickly responding in a hurtful way when someone has been hurtful to you—in short, impulsive retaliation.

Also in this survey there was some level of support for or mixed feelings about impulsive retaliation from all students. For example:

- On a question about how best to respond if someone is hurtful, the response “immediately respond” was

ranked higher than the response “take time to calm down.”

- On a question related to whether who students admire, students reported mixed feelings about someone who “was treated badly and retaliated.”

One key concern about the fact that students may have mixed messages about impulsive retaliation is that this means that the social norms are not clear. Look closely at the results on your survey to see if you see these kinds of patterns, which will need to be addressed.

This level of mixed feelings about retaliation have an obvious relation to what young people see happen in the world.

As the creator of this program was first looking at the above data, a headline in the New York Times read, “France Strikes ISIS Targets in Syria in Retaliation for Attacks.”⁵² Note also that on the campaign trail in 2016, Melania Trump stated from written notes: “As you may know by now, when you attack him he will punch back 10 times harder. No matter who you are, a man or a woman, he treats everyone equal.”⁵³ More fully addressing the issue of retaliation could shift into humanities and government classes.

The key problem with retaliation is that this continues a Cycle of Hurt and everyone ends up feeling miserable. Acts of retaliation are frequently the major factor behind what is called “drama.” One student perceives that another has been hurtful and retaliates, then, the other student retaliates, then, friends and supporters jump in.

Impulsive retaliation is also often very evident online, because it is much more likely that someone fails to Think Things Through upon receipt of a hurtful message or seeing that someone has publicly posted hurtful things about you.

Embrace Civility Strategy: The *Embrace Civility* approach to reduce impulsive retaliation combines these strategies:

- **Self-regulation.** Stopping impulsive behavior requires self-regulation—stopping yourself and remaining calm. “I will keep my cool.”
- **Keep Your Power.** Not allowing what happens to you control how you feel about yourself or respond can reduce retaliation. “I choose not to let anyone control how I feel about myself or act.”
- **People Can Change.** This is the Growth Mindset perspective. People who believe that someone’s personality is fixed, and thus can’t be changed, are more inclined to retaliate.⁵⁴ However, it is possible for people to gain an understanding that others can change. Belief that others can change reduces the likelihood of retaliating. “I know others can change.”

- **Problem-solving.** Knowing how to engage in effective problem-solving to Think Things Through and decide how best to respond can reduce retaliation. “I will Think Things Through to decide how best to proceed.”

RATIONALIZATIONS

To hold those who have engaged in wrongdoing accountable requires that they accept personal responsibility for the harm they have caused. Very often, students and adults will rationalize their wrongdoing. Bandura, a social science researcher, has outlined a theory of moral disengagement that provides the basis for a better understanding of this rationalization process.⁵⁵

Generally, an individual’s moral code, which is developed through childhood and adolescence, provides internalized standards that help them regulate their actions. People strive to keep their behavior in line with their personal standards.

However, through the moral disengagement processes, people can create rationalizations to support their self opinion that they are ethical, while engaging in behavior that is unethical.

The four primary approaches that people use to support moral disengagement and rationalize wrongdoing are:

- **Spin It.** Actions are portrayed as serving some larger purpose or euphemistic terms are used to describe the action. “Someone needed to speak out.” “I was just joking around.” “It was a prank.”
- **Deny Personal Responsibility.** This can occur if many are engaging in certain behavior, if someone else can be blamed for encouraging the action, or to rationalize not stepping in to help. “Everybody does it.” “Someone else started it.” “School staff should have stopped this.”
- **Deny the Harm.** This allows people to minimize the harm they have caused. “What I did or what happened wasn’t that bad.” “He or she is overreacting.”
- **Blame the Target.** Those who are targeted may have personal characteristics or behaviors that make it easier to blame them. Once someone has been dehumanized, it is easier to rationalize that hurtful actions were justified. “He or she deserved it.”

Students who engage in hurtful behavior are very likely to use these rationalizations when faced with an accusation of such behavior. So are students or school staff who fail to step in to help.

You can also frequently see evidence of the use of such rationalizations in society, such as when someone in a position of power engages in actions that are disapproved by many. That person very frequently uses one or more of the above approaches to rationalize that their actions were appropriate or justified.

Embrace Civility Strategy: *Embrace Civility* teaches students how these rationalizations can interfere accepting personal responsibility for wrongdoing. Naming and pointing out these rationalizations may help these students better recognize when this is happening.

RESTORATIVE RESOLUTIONS

While certainly it is necessary to hold those who were hurtful accountable, punishment can result in bad outcomes. Restorative approaches can foster accountability for those who engaged were hurtful.⁵⁶

A punishment-based approach seeks to find who is to blame and asks these questions:⁵⁷

- Who did it?
- What “rule” was broken?
- How should the offender be punished?

Restorative approaches focus on holding those who made a mistake personally accountable and responsible for remedying any harm. Restorative resolutions ask these questions:

- What is the harm to all parties involved and to the community?
- What needs to be done to repair the harm?
- Who is responsible for this repair?
- What needs to occur to prevent similar harm in the future?

Ideally, when students recognize that they have been hurtful, they will decide by themselves to take steps to make things better.

A key component of restorative practices is that after a person who has engaged in wrongdoing has taken these steps to accept personal responsibility and take steps to make things better, that person is fully embraced as a welcome member of the community.

Embrace Civility Strategy: In several *Embrace Civility* lessons, both for those who were hurtful and for their friends, this kind of restorative approach is recommended. The Thinking Things Through process is also important in helping someone who was hurtful decide how to proceed.

The key phrase in *Embrace Civility* is encouraging those who have been hurtful to “stop, own it, and fix it.” This is a combination of avoiding rationalizations and accepting responsibility to make things better.

EMPOWERING THOSE WHO ARE TREATED BADLY TO BE POSITIVELY POWERFUL

“DIFFERENT” OR “DEVIANT”

Students who are treated badly are often perceived of as being “different” in some way. Such differences could include having disabilities, are or are perceived to have a different sexual orientation or identity, are overweight, or are a member of a racial or religious minority.⁵⁸

Unfortunately, in too many schools, being “different” becomes cast as being “deviant.” “Different” does not become “deviant” until some powerful group—which could be students, staff, or community—defines such “difference” in this manner.

A report by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights stated:

*While all bullying is harmful to America’s youth, some experts believe that bullying based on young people’s identities—such as their sex, race, ethnicity or national origin, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity, or religion—can be particularly damaging. Unfortunately, these forms of bullying are all too common in American youth organizations.*⁵⁹

Embrace Civility Strategy: *Embrace Civility* maintains a strong focus on inclusion.

LACK OF SELF-CONFIDENCE

Some students who are more frequently treated badly also lack self-confidence and social skills.⁶⁰ These students may present themselves in a manner that communicates “weakness.”

Embrace Civility Strategy: *Embrace Civility* includes strategies to help all students, but especially those who are more frequently treated badly, to increase self-confidence and their skills in responding more effectively in hurtful situations. In *Be Positively Powerful* many strategies have been incorporated to assist these students in gaining greater self-confidence. These are discussed below.

PROVOCATIVE VICTIMS

There is also a small group of students who researchers call “provocative victims.”⁶¹ These students have low social skills. Unfortunately, they may act in ways that disrupt activities in their class and this leads to rejection.

These students may have a condition such as ADHD or Asperger’s that makes it harder for them to remain in control of their actions. Throughout the years, these students may have been excluded or rejected. They now act

in ways that demonstrate their insecurity and fear of rejection. These students require intensive assistance at a Tier III level in MTSS.

Embrace Civility Strategy: Members of the **Student Leadership Team** can also be helpful in supporting these students.

Very often, what these students need is someone simply to reach out to be kind. Often, they are acting impulsively and could benefit from a reminder to self-regulate—to become calm. Sometimes they may need help in removing themselves from a disruptive environment. “Hey, I can see this really isn’t working for you. Let’s go to a quieter place and talk.”

HIGHER SOCIAL STATUS STUDENTS

Other students who are treated badly are—or are perceived to be—striving for a higher position on the school’s social status “ladder.” These students may or may not actually be striving to achieve a higher social status, however, they are considered to be “rivals” by those who are being hurtful to achieve social dominance.⁶²

These hurtful situations are most often considered by students to be “drama.” The hurtful situation can be one-directional or bi-directional and may involve supporters or allies on one or both sides. The hurtful acts can spread through groups of friends in a negative social contagion. Sets of friends appear to protect their own in the establishment of social hierarchies. Many times, romantic relationships are implicated.

Embrace Civility Strategy: *Embrace Civility* provides guidance in how students can respond in a powerfully positive manner if being treated badly that will be especially helpful for students in these situations—both those targeted and their friends.

Students who have social leadership skills and are committed to being kind and compassionate are the perfect ones to serve on the **Student Leadership Team**.

THE HARMS

A recent commentary in *Pediatrics*, outlined the harms associated with bullying victimization:

*Bullying can have life-long health consequences. It has been associated with stress-related physical and mental health symptoms, including depression, anxiety, post traumatic stress, and suicidal ideation. When bullying is motivated by discrimination or an attack on someone’s core identity (eg, their sexual orientation), it can have especially harmful health consequences. The effects of bullying are not limited to the bullied. Bystanders who witness bullying may experience mental health consequences (eg, distress) as well.*⁶³

While the research evidence on the harms is clear, there is another side of the story that is not often told. Many of today’s most creative and innovative leaders also report that they were bullied as youth. They were bullied because they were creative and innovative—and considered “different.”

Students who report frequently bullying others and/or being frequently bullied are at increased risk for suicide-related behavior.⁶⁴ Those who report both engaging in and being bullied have the highest risk for suicide-related behavior.

However, too often, students are provided with messages that “bullying has caused a young person to suicide.”

The Center for Disease Control has expressed concerns that these messages have the dangerous potential to create copycat behavior.⁶⁵ If someone is being bullied or feeling hopeless for some other reason, this message could cause that person to think suicide might be an option to consider.

Embrace Civility Strategy: NEVER use the message: ‘Don’t bully, you could cause someone to suicide.’ Also, never allow students to create or present this message in posters. Schools should avoid use of any “bullying prevention” approaches that focus on student suicide, including use of the movie *The Bully*.

An important lesson in *Embrace Civility* is helping all students recognize that if they know of someone who is feeling hopelessness or helplessness, it is exceptionally important to report this to an adult who can help.

POSITIVE EMPOWERMENT

Embrace Civility contains a number of strategies to seek to empower students who are being treated badly. These are in addition to the mindfulness/self-regulation, character strengths, problem-solving, and kindness strategies set forth above.

CONNECTEDNESS

Students who are bullied, but who have supportive friends, experience less distress and are less depressed.⁶⁶

The CDC has also identified “connectedness” as key to addressing the concerns of youth suicide, which is an identified risk for students being and engaging in bullying.⁶⁷

(R)evue of studies to date suggests that connectedness affects STB through one or more of the following routes: (1) expanding intergenerational social networks; (2) heightening opportunities for soliciting and activating assistance from others or systems (e.g., schools, families, or other social systems); (3) enhancing the likelihood that worrisome affect and behavior, including early signs of distress or more direct warning signs for suicidal behavior, will be noticed and proactively addressed by

proximal systems (parents, peers, schools); (4) increasing exposure to positive coping and help-seeking norms; (5) increasing positive emotion and, as a consequence, cognitive flexibility and emotion regulation capacity; and (6) enhancing opportunities for experiencing belonging and utility in a community of others..

Embrace Civility encourages students who have been treated badly to reach out to friends and encourages students who witness hurtful incidents to reach out to the one who was treated badly.

PERSONAL POWER

No one will never be able to have full control over when or if someone might treat them badly. The key underlying premise of what is called Rational Emotive Thinking is that harmful consequences are not just caused by the bad things that happen to us, but also by our beliefs about those bad things.⁶⁸

While we we don't always have control over what happens to us, we do have the ability to control what we think of ourselves and how we respond. Therefore, we have the ability to control the result.

This is an old theory. The underlying principles of the ancient Stoic philosophers, as set forth by Epictetus, who in the first century A.D. was: "Men are disturbed not by things, but by the views which they take of them."

Embrace Civility Strategy: *Embrace Civility* most powerful statement to teach all students to think to themselves in situations where someone has been hurtful: "I choose not to give you the power to control what I think about myself."

POSITIVE FOCUS

Students who have positive feelings about themselves are less likely to demonstrate perceived weakness that could lead to their being targeted and better situated to avoid thinking badly of themselves if this occurs.

The Positive Psychology Center, mentioned above, conducted a study with adults, testing a number of positive strategies to determine their effectiveness in promoting happiness.⁶⁹

One key strategy was found to have the greatest success in generating happiness and decreasing depression was: Gratitude—Three Good Things in Life. Participants were asked to write down three things that went well each day every night for one week. In addition, they were asked to provide a reason why they thought this was a good thing.

Embrace Civility Strategy: *Embrace Civility* reminds students to focus on the good things that are happening to them.

FOCUS ON FUTURE

One study of children who were bullied in elementary school, but who were thriving in high school, indicated that these successful students had maintained a focus on their future goals and ambitions.⁷⁰

The desire to thrive is the primary drive of all human beings, preparing for the future is essential to thriving, and much of human functioning has evolved for the purpose of creating the future.⁷¹

Learning how to create and achieve goals, plan, problem solve, take action, and effectively deal with obstacles or disappointments are critically important personal empowerment skills.

Embrace Civility Strategy: *Embrace Civility* encourages students to create goals and then engage in planning, problem solving, and action to achieve those goals.

A POWERFUL PRESENCE

Students who are treated badly often appear to vulnerable and respond to hurtful acts in a weak manner that supports their further victimization. Many students who are bullied have physical postures that demonstrate a lack of personal power.

Research conducted at Harvard School of Business has demonstrated that adopting a pose that indicates power—a "power pose"—can result in an increase in feelings of self-confidence.

Holding a "power pose" before a challenging interpersonal relationship task was demonstrated to increase effective performance. In other words, it is possible to "fake it" by assuming a "power pose," which will then help a person feel more confident.⁷²

An excellent TedTalk by Dr. Cuddy on Power Posing provides greater insight into this. With younger students, watch the highly popular "Let It Go" music video from the movie *Frozen*.⁷³ Note the point in time where Elsa decides to let the bad stuff go and assumes her personal power.

Embrace Civility Strategy: *Embrace Civility* suggests to students the importance of walking with pride and that if someone is hurtful to them, one of the first things they should do is pay attention to their body and hold themselves tall.

POSITIVELY RESPONDING

It is important for students who are treated badly to have a plan of action in mind for any time that someone is hurtful. **Embrace Civility** includes instructions on how to respond if someone says or does something hurtful.

The importance of this approach is that students should not respond in a way that demonstrates loss of his or her "personal power" or is hurtful in return.

Embrace Civility Strategy: The recommended *Embrace Civility* process to follow is this:

- Keep my personal power and keep my cool.
- Decide whether I can or should respond immediately.
- Remember, this person wants attention, so will not give this person attention.
- If I respond, keep it short, calm, and powerful, then walk away with pride. Or just walk away.
- If online, capture the post, report, and block. PM my friends and ask them to report. If sent to me privately, capture and block the person. W
- Think Things Through to decide what else to do.
- Within the next hour, reach out to say or do something kind to three other people because this will make me feel better..

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INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

INTRODUCTORY ASSEMBLY AND ACTIVITIES

As discussed in the Introductory section, if the school wants to initiate *Embrace Civility* in an assembly, it is recommended that Lessons 1 and 2 provide the basis for this assembly. An assembly slideshow template has been provided both in demonstration format and the basic slides.

However, this introductory material should be presented again within the classroom to allow for discussion, as outlined in this section.

Ideally, the school has already established an initial **Student Leadership Team**. The **Student Leadership Team** can either take full or partial responsibility for the presentation of the Introductory Assembly information, along with the school staff member who will be providing support for the **Team**.

As noted, this **Team** should be allowed to grow, with the only requirement for membership being the completion of an application. During the assembly, students should be invited to join the **Team**.

Prior to the presentation of the student data, the **Team** should be allowed to review the data and the presentation and provide input on how they think this information should be presented. It is not necessary to follow the approach outlined. Allow your students to take the lead.

Another **Team** meeting should be held shortly after this Introductory Assembly. The **Student Leadership Team** could then discuss how to create an overall school message of how the school can embrace civility.

If your students want to choose another term for their activities, this should absolutely be encouraged. Some examples may be:

- (Name of School) Where Everybody Belongs.
- The (Name of School) Kindness Initiative.

The slideshow is provided in a Mac Keynote format. Unfortunately, because of the graphics and type, this cannot be easily exported to Powerpoint. Assuming a participant in the school has or can borrow a Mac, the slideshow colors can be easily modified to fit the school colors. A new introduction slide for the lessons can be created with the Student Leadership Team's choice of a name. Please continue to incorporate the copyright notice.

An early activity of the **Team** should be the creation of a display at the entrance of the school will a word cloud incorporating the most frequently selected words to illustrate the concept of civility and words to describe someone who steps in to help. The **Team** could also create a statement of values and intentions for the school community.

Hopefully, the **Team** will include students who have artistic skills. A second, very valuable, activity would be the creation of posters, screen savers, bookmarks that incorporate key positive norms data, especially the responses on questions and 7. **Team** members could also create posters that illustrate positive relations skills.

It is recommended that the **Team** then focus on launching school-wide kindness activities. A search on "school, kindness" will provide links to many different kinds of activities.

DISCUSSION SURVEY

If the paper discussion survey is used, students should be asked to complete this survey, then fold the paper in fourths and hand it in. Then, the sets of pages should be shuffled and a set should be provided to each student. The students will be asked to respond in discussions based on the responses to this version. In this way, the anonymity of students will be protected.

One way to demonstrate the survey findings to the class is to have students stand based on how the person completing the survey responded. Several students should be tasked with keeping count. The tally for how many students stand up for each response can be displayed.

The paper discussion survey does not ask questions that require a written response to protect student anonymity. On any questions that were included on the online survey that required a written response, give each student one to four small note papers (half of an 8 1/2 X 11 piece of paper cut into 4 pieces) and have them write their own words. Then tape the words on the wall, posting the duplications together.

SURVEY RESPONSES FOR STAFF

Note, the student responses on the online survey on Questions 8 and 9 and 14 through 18 should not be shared with students. While the student responses are not shared with the **Student Leadership Team**, it likely would be very beneficial to hold smaller focus groups with members of this **Team**, asking the following questions:

- What insight or guidance would you provide to school staff on how they can improve their relations with students in this school?
- What insight or guidance would you provide to school staff on how they can more effectively help if a student is having relationship problems with another student?

When the data on questions 8 and 9 and 14 through 18 are shared with staff it is recommended that a Think Things Through discussion occur. The recommended questions to Think Things Through include these:

- What have we learned from this data?
- What should our objectives be?
- What strategies can we implement to achieve these objectives?
- What challenges might we face in implementing any of these strategies?
- How can those challenges be addressed?
- How will we measure effectiveness? Note that a repeat use of this survey will allow for such an evaluation.

FOUR KEY APPROACHES

Ideally, there has been a school wide implementation of the school wide approaches as described on pages 9 through 11. These are some additional ways that these Four Key Approaches can be implemented.

OVERALL POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY APPROACH

One classroom strategy that could be used throughout the year is this:

- Have a number of craft sticks and on each write:

- “Something that happened that I am thankful for and why I am thankful.”
- “Something I did that I am proud of.”
- A goal of mine and one action I took today or recently to accomplish this goal.”
- “How I reached out to be kind to someone today.”
- “Who I connected with today in a positive way and how this made me feel.”
- “A challenge I addressed and how I successfully thought things through.”
- “How I used a personal strength of mine.”

- Engage students in a brief mindfulness breathing period.
- Then, pass the sticks around. Each student picks one stick without looking and provides a response to the statement on that stick. If they do not have a response to this statement, they should be allowed to select another stick. Or if they have a burning desire to provide a response to a specific statement, allow them to do so.
- Alternatively, during a minute for mindfulness, you can pull out one or two sticks and ask the students to think about this as they are breathing deeply.

An alternative way these questions could be asked is in a morning announcement for the entire school. Students could be asked to close their eyes and breath slowly and while they are doing this, ask them to think of one or two of these questions.

MINDFULNESS AND SELF REGULATION

As noted, there are many sites that provide excellent guidance on establishing mindfulness practices. One very simple practice would be to simply have students practice mindfulness or self-regulation for several minutes upon coming into class after a transition. A minute of silence for self-calming.

Then at any time the students appear to be getting “rambunctious,” a return to just a minute of silence. At any time a student appears to be struggling, remind that student to take a minute to achieve mindfulness. Especially at the elementary grade level, small glitter jars are a marvelously helpful tool.

CHARACTER STRENGTHS

As noted above, schools or teachers are encouraged to have students complete either the VIA Institute on Character character strengths survey or the shorter survey provided with this program. This provides an indication of what each student’s strengths are.

Teachers are encouraged to help students celebrate their strengths by discussing their specific strengths pattern with their class mates and through some kind of an art project that illustrates their strengths.

As students are discussing strategies to respond to any hurtful situations either as one who was targeted, one who was hurtful who is seeking to make amends, or a witness, students could be asked how they could use a strength in this situation. For example, “If one of your strengths was humor, how could you use this strength in this situation?”

Whenever a teacher is discussing any issue of concern with a student with a student and engaging in problem solving, asking that student what his or her strengths are and how he or she might use their personal strengths to find a resolution for this problem situation is advisable.

PROBLEM SOLVING

The problem solving approach taught through Embrace Civility can be used for any kind of situation that requires problem solving.

KINDNESS

Continuously encouraging acts of kindness is critically important. This is especially important for any student who is having challenges in fitting in. Encouraging that child to reach out to be kind at least 3 times a day and to record what he or she has done to report back to their teacher/supporter can, based on the research, result in an improvement in peer acceptance.

It is strongly recommended that the key project initiated by the **Student Leadership Team** be focused on kindness.

LESSON ACTIVITIES

Depending on the age of the students and the time, students could be engaged in activities such as creating a skit to demonstrate what they have learned. They could draw a cartoon or with with a group of students to draw a cartoon. They could create a poster illustrating the concepts.

The Think Things Through document can also be used for them to write in as they go through these lessons or at the end of the lessons.

IMPLEMENTATION AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL

Use of either of the surveys may not be advised at the elementary school level. As an alternative, the teacher can ask students to discuss the issues that are raised in the survey questions.

LESSON 1.

CIVILITY AND POSITIVE NORMS

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

The students you are teaching will:

- Understand the meaning of the term “civility.”
- Discuss their values for their classroom or school climate.
- Receive an introduction to the overall messages of the *Embrace Civility* program.
- Understand that the majority of students do not like to see their peers be hurtful.
- Understand that the majority of students like and admire those who are respectful, reach out to help others, help a friend stop being hurtful, if treated badly responded in a positive manner, report serious concerns, and if they were hurtful, stopped, owned it and fixed it.
- Understand that the majority of students do not like and admire those who are disrespectful, create hurtful drama to get attention, support those being hurtful, and ignore hurtful situations.
- Discuss issues around impulsive retaliation and come to a realization that if they understand that people can change and there was alternative ways to respond if they feel they have been treated badly, then this is an effective way to stop the Cycle of Hurt. Further, impulsive retaliation involves actions that undermine civility.

MESSAGES AND SURVEY QUESTIONS

The messages in the Student Guide are those on the top of the first page.

INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH

The concept of “civility” underlies the entire program. There are many different definitions of civility. The words on the slide provided with the program were specifically chosen to promote the positive objectives of this program.

In your school, you are encouraged to find your own words or statements. How do the kinds of words associated with the term “civility” reflect the kind of school community students desire?

You can start with the words most frequently chosen by the students on Question 1 the online survey or have students use up to four pieces of paper, as described above, to provide their own words.

It is possible to create a Word Cloud with the words provided by students in your school, class, or classes.

In class discussion, engage students in the creation of a statement or statements of the positive norms they desire for their class or the overall school using these terms. Alternatively, or in addition, have them create a statement of their own commitment to civility.

Next, display the data from the responses to Question 2 from the online survey or Question 1 from the paper discussion survey. The conversation about this data should be in the manner of encouraging student “ownership” and “responsibility”—not of blame. Then, present the data from Questions 3 and 4 from the online survey which shows actual incident rates as reported by witnesses.

In an assembly, it would be best if student leaders present this data and indicate that they are working on a school team that intends to see that changes are made so that everyone in the school feels safe and welcome. And anyone who feels that this is an important mission is welcome on this team—provide information on how to apply.

In classroom discussion, have the students stand to demonstrate the response on the paper discussion survey they have been provided to Questions 1, 2, and 3 and have several students record the totals. In discussion, discuss with the students whether they would like to see changes made in the way students treat each other at school and online.

Indicate that the *Embrace Civility* program is designed to assist the students in doing this. Introduce the five areas that will be covered. Indicate that these are the concerns that *Embrace Civility* is seeking to address. Ask for agreement from the students that this is a worthy goal and that it would feel much nicer coming to school every day if these numbers were not as high.

Next show the data from Questions 5 from the online survey or have the students stand to demonstrate the response on the paper discussion survey they have been provided to Questions 4 and have several students record the totals.

Have students stand based on the percentage who responded that they do not like to see students be hurtful or disrespectful on Question 5 or 4. Have 2 students come up to the front of the class to play act a hurtful incident. Ask the students to put themselves in the shoes of the student who play acted being hurtful and describe what they see.

Discuss how if they are ever hurtful to someone and other students are present they should realize that while other students might not step in to help, which is something this program is going to try to change, this is how many people in the audience really do not like to see them engaging in this kind of hurtful activity.

An alternative way to do this would be to hand out an appropriate number of pieces of paper with frowny faces as the percentage of students who disapprove of hurtful behavior. Then when a hurtful incident is play acted, stop the action and ask the students to hold up the frowny faces. This demonstrates how many people watching you be hurtful really do not like to see this happening.

Then, ask the students how knowing how many of their peers really do not like to see this kind of hurtful behavior might change their behavior if they see someone being hurtful. If they know that this many students who are seeing this hurtful behavior also really do not like to see this, will this help them gain the personal strength to step in to help?

Next, present data from Question 6 from the online survey in a pie chart or bar chart or have students stand and tally the responses from Questions 5 from the paper discussion survey.

Note that all of these reasons for not being hurtful are valid reasons. Discuss these reasons with students, encouraging them to present the reasons that are most important to them. If you want to, you can reorder the statements based on the data in the survey on the next slide and use this as a poster or have students create their own posters.

This should likely be the end of lesson one for one class session, especially if the material is being taught using a paper discussion survey, which will take time to tally.

Next, show the data from responses to Question 7 from the online survey or have the students stand to demonstrate the response on the paper discussion survey they have been provided to Question 6 about who students admire, do not admire, and have mixed feelings about.

As noted on the slideshow, it is best to group this data into 3 sections, as is shown on page one of the Student Guide: The actions of peers the majority of students indicate they admire.

- Are respectful and kind to others.
- Reach out to help someone who has been treated badly.
- Try to include someone who has been excluded.
- Tell someone being hurtful to stop.
- Help someone being treated badly leave the situation.
- Help someone who was hurtful make things right.
- Help other students resolve an argument or conflict.
- Tell someone being hurtful to stop.
- Help someone who was hurtful make things right.

- Were treated badly, but stood tall and responded in a positive way.
- Tell an adult if it is serious or has not stopped.
- Were hurtful, but stopped and made things right.

The actions of their peers the majority of students say they do not admire.

- Think it is “cool” to denigrate others.
- Create “drama” to get attention.
- Encourage students to exclude those they consider “different.”
- Laugh when seeing someone being treated badly.
- Encourage someone who is being hurtful.
- Ignore hurtful situations involving others.

Any actions about which students have mixed feelings. Based on prior use of this question in a survey, the student responses to this response option are likely to be the most mixed. That is, a greater number of students will likely either be supportive of this response or have mixed feelings.

- Were treated badly and retaliated.
- Ignore hurtful situations involving others. (Could also end up in this category.)

Discuss these findings with students asking them how knowing who their peers admire or do not admire might change their actions in situations where they might think of being hurtful, see someone being hurtful, or experience having someone be hurtful to them.

Ask the students how they think acts of retaliation fit with the values they expressed in the prior lesson related to civility and their desires for their school climate. Indicate that you will be returning to the issue of retaliation and how to find a better path throughout the *Embrace Civility* lessons.

In a classroom discussion, finish this lesson by showing the five slides for what they are going to learn in *Embrace Civility: Reach Out. Say “Stop.” Report Concerns. Stop, Own It, and Fix It. Be Positively Powerful.*

LESSON 2.

BEING A HELPFUL ALLY

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

The students you are teaching will:

- Recognize that when they see someone being hurtful or disrespectful, they have three choices. They can be a Hurtful Participant, Passive Observer, or Helpful Ally.
- Understand that there are three basic ways they can be a Helpful Ally include reaching out to be kind, saying “stop,” and reporting concerns.
- Understand that Helpful Allies can be very effective and are described in very favorable ways by their peers.
- Recognize the common barriers to being a Helpful Ally and understanding how they could help in a way that overcomes the barrier.

MESSAGE

The introductory messages in the Student Guide are those on the bottom of page one in the Student Guide. However, these messages are repeated in the next 3 lessons that address Reach Out, Say “Stop,” and Report Concerns.

INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH

In an introduction assembly, lesson 2 will proceed from the end of lesson one.

For classroom discussion, the Positively Powerful Strategies slide is presented again as an introduction. This slide is followed by the What Students Think slide setting forth the data from Question 5 or 4 on what percentage of students do not like to see someone being hurtful.

Tell students that when they see someone being hurtful, they should remember that the majority of students do not like to see this. This can help them be more brave in making a decision to step in to help.

Present the information that there are three ways they can respond if they witness someone being hurtful.

Present the Word Cloud showing the words students in your school used to describe a Helpful Ally from Question 20 on the online survey. If an online survey has not been conducted, use the four pieces of paper technique presented above to identify these words and determine how many students use the same words.

Provide the student responses from Question 7 on the online survey or Question 6 from the paper discussion survey that relate to how students admire those who engage in these actions:

- Reach out to help someone who has been treated badly.
- Try to include someone who has been excluded.
- Tell someone being hurtful to stop.
- Help someone being treated badly leave the situation.
- Help someone who was hurtful make things right.

- Help other students resolve an argument or conflict.
- Tell someone being hurtful to stop.
- Help someone who was hurtful make things right.
- Tell an adult if it is serious or has not stopped.

Also point out the actions they do not admire:

- Ignore hurtful situations involving others.

Next, present the data from Questions 23 and 24 from the online survey in a combined graph that shows any differences between intent and action. If this is addressed relying on the paper discussion survey, these are Questions 7 and 8.

Discuss the good news about this the Word Cloud and the data which is that students have good things to say about those who step in to help, that many students do want to be a Helpful Ally, and that students all have insight into safe and effective ways they could step in to help.

Then provide the responses from Question 25 of the online survey or Question 9 from the paper discussion survey. Have the students categorize these reasons into three sections:

- Fears related to their own abilities.
- Fears related to the possible reactions of others.
- Excuses for not stepping in to help.

Indicate that in the next lessons, you are going to be providing more insight into effective ways to step in to help that will increase their skills and reduce the risks they have identified. Ask the students to reflect on their fears of what others might think based on their new insight into how others do admire those who step in to help.

Discuss how they will learn more about excuses in another lesson. Discuss how excuses are ways to make yourself feel better when you want to do something or know you should do something, but there is some barrier. So you make an excuse to make yourself feel better.

In an introduction assembly, depending on the age of the students, the responses to Questions 23, 24, and 25 may be abbreviated or omitted, as time may be a factor and it may be best to display this data at a time when discussion is possible. If the data from these questions is omitted

The introductory assembly should then end with a showing of the 5 key lesson slides. The class discussion can just show the Helpful Ally slides of Reach Out, Say “Stop,” and Report Concerns.

LESSON 3.

REACHING OUT TO BE KIND

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

The students you are teaching will:

- Recognize the reasons why they would want to step in to help.
- Learn the many different ways they already know they could reach out to be kind.
- Learn how they can help someone who is being treated badly identify desired goals, generate possible powerful strategies that are in accord with their values, think of the potential consequences, and realize that they may need to try more than one strategy.
- Learn how to help others who are having a conflict resolve that conflict. Identify the steps in conflict resolution, which include helping those who are in conflict express their feelings about what has happened in a manner that can lead to resolution, generate possible strategies to resolve the situation, and pick the best strategy and one to try if that does not work.
- Learn important safe strategies to help someone who is being treated badly leave the situation without getting into an argument with the one who is being hurtful. Recognize that if they are not able to help, they should report their concerns to someone who can help.

MESSAGES

The messages in the Student Guide are those on page two, Reach Out.

INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH

Optionally, present the Powerfully Positive Strategies providing the overview of the program and present the slide on what percentage of students do not like to see someone being hurtful as a reminder of the social norms.

Present the Reach Out lesson slide. Tell students that what we know from the research is that when a student is being hurtful and another student reaches out to be kind to the one who was treated badly, this really helps the one who was targeted feel better. Just one friendly person makes a huge difference.

Provide the student responses from Question 7 on the online survey or Question 6 from the paper discussion survey for actions that students admire as a reminder of the social norms:

- Reach out to help someone who has been treated badly.

- Try to include someone who has been excluded.
- Help someone being treated badly leave the situation.
- Help other students resolve an argument or conflict.

Also point out the actions they do not admire:

- Ignore hurtful situations involving others.

The questions of why I would help in the material are designed to help break through the barriers to helping. Engage the students in a discussion about why they would want to step in to help. The slide on reasons not to be hurtful can be shown. Ask students how to translate these reasons why not to be hurtful into reasons to reach out to help.

Everyone will have personal reasons and all reasons are good. You can also remind students of the words their peers used to describe those who step in to help.

Next, present a sample of the data from the online survey for question 21, complete with misspellings, on strategies they can use to reach out. Alternatively, if an online survey was not completed, ask students to respond to this question in discussion or use the four pieces of paper technique.

Discuss ways they indicated they could or have reached out to be kind to someone who had been treated badly or was being left out or ways that someone reached out to be kind to them if they were treated badly or feeling left out.

Discuss how it makes them feel when someone reaches out to be kind to them. Tell them that the survey or discussion ideas show that they already know many strategies they can use to reach out and positively acknowledge them for this.

Directly discuss and have the students practice the safer way to intervene in a hurtful situation. Have students practice a safe intervention approach for times if they witness someone being treated badly in a situation. This is not considered “saying stop.” This is considered reaching out to help the one being treated badly leave the situation.

The lessons on Think Things Through and Resolve Conflict both incorporate the problem solving steps. As noted, this problem-solving approach is recommended as a key school wide approach.

You may want to teach these steps on their own and then apply the steps to the two situations—helping someone who was treated badly figure out what to do and seeking to resolve conflict between two students. The same Think Things Through approach is used later in Be Positively Powerful and a modification is used in Stop, Own It and Fix It.

Have the students describe some typical kinds of hurtful situations they have witnessed. Then working in teams of two or three, have them practice going through the steps to generate some possible strategies, including one that they

do not choose because it is not in accord with positive values or could lead to negative consequences. They should describe what strategy they would select to try first and one or two back-up strategies.

LESSON 4.

SAY “STOP”

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

The students you are teaching will:

- Recognize and challenge the excuses people use when they are hurtful to try to deny that they have done anything wrong.
- Learn the important guidelines for telling someone who is being hurtful to stop, including the importance of keeping themselves safe, not retaliating, not increasing attention to someone who wants attention, and working with others.
- Learn the different ways they already know they could say “stop.”
- Learn a specific strategy they can use to use to help a friend who has been hurtful stop, own it and fix it.
- Understand the importance of Thinking Things Through if their friend refuses to stop, own it and fix it regarding their personal values and the possible damage to their own reputation.

MESSAGE

The messages in the Student Guide are those on page three, Say “Stop.”

INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH

Optionally, present the Powerfully Positive Strategies providing the overview of the program and present the slide on what percentage of students do not like to see someone being hurtful as a reminder of the social norms.

Present the Say “Stop” lesson slide. Tell students that what we know from the research is that when a student is being hurtful and another student tells that person to stop, the person generally does stop.

Provide the student responses from Question 7 on the online survey or Question 6 from the paper discussion survey for these actions:

- Tell someone being hurtful to stop.
- Help someone who was hurtful make things right.
- Were hurtful, but stopped and made things right.

Also point out the actions they do not admire:

- Ignore hurtful situations involving others.
- Encourage someone who is being hurtful.

Ask students to describe some of the things they have heard people say to try to make it seem that something they have done was not that bad or was justified. Give the students 4 quarter page pieces of paper and ask them to write the things they have heard or even said to themselves if they were hurtful.

Talk to the students about the concept of trying to make it appear that something hurtful you have done was justified for a reason. Introduce the four Excuses: Spin It. Deny personal responsibility. Deny the harm. Blame the target..

Have a sign for each of these Excuses taped on the wall. Have the students tape their reasons or excuses they wrote in the appropriate category. Discuss.

Next, discuss the Important Guidelines for saying stop. Stress the importance of keeping themselves safe and not increasing the attention to the one who is being hurtful.

Next, present a sample of the data from the online survey for questions 22, how they could say “stop.” Alternatively, if an online survey was not completed, ask students to respond to this question in discussion or use the four pieces of paper technique.

Discuss ways they indicated they have told someone who was being hurtful to stop, heard someone tell someone who was hurtful to stop, or were told to stop.

Discuss how they can take steps to help their friend recognize that it is not okay to be hurtful, the importance of owning it and then fixing it. Have students practice a discussion with a friend in a skit. Discuss reasons why they might not want to remain friends with someone who is constantly hurtful and refused to stop, own it, and fix it. Remind them of what others think of someone who appears to encourage someone who is hurtful.

LESSON 5.

REPORT CONCERNS

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVE

- Learn to identify situations that are serious and should therefore be reported to an adult, what information should be reported, and who to report these situations to, including if potentially really serious.

MESSAGE

The messages in the Student Guide are those on page four, Report Concerns.

INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH

This lesson will be taught in more of a direct manner. Make sure you have information about any reporting system used in your school, district, or state. You might be able to get documents from such a reporting system.

Provide the student responses from Question 7 on the online survey or Question 6 from the paper discussion survey for actions that students admire as a reminder of the social norms:

- Tell an adult if it is serious or has not stopped.

Also point out the actions they do not admire:

- Ignore hurtful situations involving others.
- Laugh when seeing someone being treated badly.
- Encourage someone who is being hurtful.

If a student brings up the idea of “tattling” and how that is wrong, tell them to forget what they have been told about “tattling” and trying to figure out if they are “tattling” or “telling.” Advise them that making sure everyone is safe and no one gets hurt is more important. Also point out that reports to the school can be made confidentially.

This lesson could be extended with actual stories that demonstrate how because a student reported, serious harm was averted.

LESSON 6.

STOP, OWN, AND FIX IT

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Identify reasons why they would not want to be hurtful to another.
- Understand that people can change and remedy the harm they have caused and that engaging in retaliation will only further the Cycle of Hurt and undermine to potential for forming or reforming positive relations.
- Learn how to Think Things Through if they were hurtful, decide to stop, acknowledge personal wrongdoing, and take steps to remedy the harm.

MESSAGES

The messages in the Student Guide are those on page five, Stop, Own It, and Fix It.

INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH

Optionally, present the Powerfully Positive Strategies providing the overview of the program and present the

slide on what percentage of students do not like to see someone being hurtful as a reminder of the social norms.

Provide the student responses from Question 7 on the online survey or Question 6 from the paper discussion survey for actions that students admire as a reminder of the social norms:

- Are respectful and kind to others.
- Were hurtful, but stopped and made things right.

Remind students that their peers obviously do not want to see them be hurtful. That students do not admire their peers who:

- Say disrespectful and hurtful things to others.
- Think it is “cool” to denigrate others.
- Create “drama” to get attention.
- Encourage students to exclude those they consider “different.”

Emphasize that everyone makes mistakes from time to time and is hurtful. But everyone also has the power to change and to take steps to make things better if they have been hurtful.

Next show the data from Questions 6 from the online survey on the reasons why they would not be hurtful or have the students stand to demonstrate the response on the paper discussion survey they have been provided to Questions 5 and have several students record the totals.

Discuss that no response is better than any other but it is helpful to know how others think and what ideas are of most importance to them.

Next, discuss the responses to Question 11 on the online survey or have the students stand to demonstrate the response on the paper discussion survey they have been provided to Questions 5 and have several students record the totals on what they were thinking at the time they were hurtful. Discuss with the students how many these responses fit with the prior discussion on Excuses.

On this question, there are two responses that will likely be highly rated, these are:

- I acted too fast when I was angry and so I wasn’t thinking.
- This person had been hurtful to me.

Indicate that these two responses are not the same as Excuses, they are more like reasons—not good reasons, but reasons. These responses indicate that they have engaged in impulsive behavior or retaliation or a combination: impulsive retaliation.

Impulsive behavior means you are acting without thinking. Discuss how this is never a good idea because this almost

always does not lead to a good response. Students may be willing to share about a time that they acted fast without thinking and what then happened, how they felt, and what they learned.

Show the video, Just Breathe, which has kindergarten students talking about mindfulness. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVA2N6tX2cg>. Hopefully, your school has also launched mindfulness practices. Advise students that the more they practice mindfulness, the easier it will be for them to quickly calm down if something has made them upset.

Retaliation is an act that perpetuates hurtful behavior and encourages it to grow. This is called the Cycle of Hurt. Provide the responses from Question 6 on the online survey or ask students to stand to respond to Question 5 on the paper survey:

- Was treated badly, but stood tall and responded in a positive way.
- Was treated badly and retaliated.

Discuss the difference in the response. Indicate that the next lesson will go into more detail on how to stand tall and respond in a positive way. Note that even though there were mixed feelings on the issue of retaliation, clearly students admire those who if treated badly stand tall and respond in a positive way.

Discuss how there are 4 key steps to avoiding impulsive retaliation.

- **Self-calming.** They keep their cool so they do not engage in impulsive action.
- **Keeping their power.** They realize that they can remain in control of how they feel about themselves and respond if someone is hurtful.
- **Knowing that people can change.** They understand that people can change. If students think that the person who was hurtful will always be hurtful, this justifies their hurtful response. But when they know that people can change they can understand that holding out for a more positive resolution is a better path.
- **Problem-solving.** They know how to Think Things Through. Having a problem-solving process to use if someone has been hurtful helps them to identify a positive and powerful response.

Engage students in conversations about hurtful incidents they have witnessed or were involved with in the past—seeking not to disclose personal names—where after an initial hurtful act, one or more than one person decided to walk a path towards resolution and how this helped.

Next, provide these student responses from Question 7 on the online survey or Question 6 from the paper discussion survey:

- Was hurtful, but stopped and made things right.

Ask them to describe a time when they stopped themselves and made things right and how this made them feel or a time when someone treated them badly, but then made things right and how this made them feel. Also discuss if they have experienced someone be hurtful to them but the this person took the steps to make things right and how they felt.

Discuss the steps they can use to stop, own it, and fix it if they have been hurtful.

LESSON 7.

BEING POSITIVELY POWERFUL

INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Recognize the importance of remaining calm when someone is hurtful to them and not overreacting in response.
- Recognize that while they can't control what happens to them, they do have the ability to control what they think about this, and therefore how this makes them feel.
- Learn how to respond in a manner that enables them to keep their own power if someone is hurtful to them.
- Learn how to Think Things Through to determine a powerful positive response of someone treats them badly.
- Learn positively powerful strategies to be powerfully positive, including:
 - Build their personal strengths.
 - Focusing on good things including positive people in their lives, good things that have happened, and their future goals.
 - Focus on their future goals.
 - Reach out to be kind to others (which closes the circle of the five key actions).

MESSAGES

The messages in the Student Guide are those on page six, Be Positively Powerful.

INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH

The I Keep My Personal Power lesson is in two parts. The first part contains the key components of responding effectively to hurtful incidents. This includes: I Keep My Cool. I Keep My Personal Power. I Stand Tall and Walk With Pride. I Respond Effectively. I Think Things Through.

The second part are things students can do to build their self-confidence and resilience. This includes: I Use My Strengths. I Focus on Good. I Work Towards My Future. I Make a Positive Difference.

Provide the student responses from Question 7 on the online survey or Question 6 from the paper discussion survey for actions that students admire as a reminder of the social norms:

- Are respectful and kind to others.
- Was treated badly, but stood tall and responded in a positive way.

Remind students that their peers obviously do not want to see them be hurtful. That students do not admire their peers who:

- Say disrespectful and hurtful things to others.
- Think it is "cool" to denigrate others.
- Create "drama" to get attention.
- Encourage students to exclude those they consider "different."

RESPONDING EFFECTIVELY

Provide the student responses from Question, 26 from the online survey and Question 11 from the paper discussion survey. Emphasize to students that there is no one "right way" to respond if someone is hurtful, but there are ways that are generally more effective, may be effective depending on the circumstances, and ways that are generally not effective. This is why it is necessary to always Think Things Through.

Discuss with students that the way they respond may need to vary based on the circumstances, but that some responses are generally better than other responses. If the online survey was conducted, provide groups of students with a printout of the results. Ask them to create a list of those responses that are generally effective, depends on the circumstances, and generally not effective. Then ask them to provide a reason or example for each statement.

If this has been done using the paper, this may take some time. It would likely be easiest to have students stand based on the response on the survey they are reading from regarding whether this response is generally helpful, depends on the circumstances, or generally not helpful.

Three papers with the 3 categories could be taped on the wall. Each of the responses could be printed off on paper prior to class and then based on student responses, the responses could be taped on the wall depending on how the majority of students responded.

Discuss this information in the context of Thinking Things Through, because the response that is most effective is going to be dependent on the circumstances.

Have the students generate powerful positive strategies to respond if someone is hurtful. Create a large poster with all of the ideas.

Staying calm requires the ability to self-regulate. This is why it is so important for schools to engage students in regular practice of mindfulness. By engaging in regular practice, students will be much more able to self-regulate if challenging situations arise.

I keep my personal power teaches the key underlying premise is that harmful consequences are not just caused by the bad things that happen to us, but also by our beliefs about what happened. You can introduce the $A + B = C$ approach:

- A is what happens that you do not have control over.
- B is how you feel about yourself and respond. This is something you do have control over.
- C is the consequence. Even though it is not possible to control A, it is possible to control B. So therefore it is possible to control the result.

It might be helpful to introduce two famous quotes for this lesson. Eleanor Roosevelt said: “No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.” Nelson Mandela said: “I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but triumph over it.” The key in this lesson is to help students who are faced with situations of others being hurtful to them to take steps to keep their power.

Engage students in thinking about how they could reframe a hurtful incident by changing their beliefs about themselves. Ask them to describe a hurtful situation. Then, take the perspective of the person who was treated badly. List the negative things that this person could think about themselves in response to this. Then, ask them to reframe and suggest positive things that this person could think about themselves as an alternative.

For greater insight into standing with power, have older students watch Amy Cuddy’s TedTalk on Power Posing. With younger students, you watch the TedTalk and share the ideas with them using the *Let It Go* music video from the movie *Frozen*. There is a point in this video where Elsa decides to let it go and from this point in the video, she stands tall and walks with pride.

SELF-CONFIDENCE AND RESILIENCE

Ideally, each student will complete the VIA Character Survey or the shorter survey provided with this program. Have students share their individual strengths profile and provide examples of how they could use one of their strengths to respond if someone was hurtful to them. Alternatively, present each strength and ask the students to describe a response to being treated badly that uses this strength.

Discuss the benefit of gratitude—paying attention to the good things and how this makes them feel. As noted earlier, this is an activity that could occur on a frequent basis, asking students to think about what they are thankful for.

Discuss the fact that when things feel challenging, focusing on their future path, what they want to do, and the steps they can take in this direction can help them to feel happier.

Lastly, share with students the research insight mentioned in an earlier section that indicates that a regular practice of reaching out to be kind to others can help if one is being bullied.

Conduct a search on “positive post it notes, bullied” to find news stories of a student who was cyberbullied and responded by bringing lots of positive post it notes to school. Caitlin, the girl who did this ended up doing a TedTalk on this. Here is one nice story: <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/caitlin-haacke-positive-post-it-day-ted-talk>

OVERALL OR CLOSING ACTIVITY

A Think Things Through Questionnaire is provided as an activity where students can write their own understandings and commitments.

This should not be viewed as an assignment for a grade. This is for students to guide their own thinking.

One way to use this document would be to provide it to the students to write their thoughts on throughout the lessons. Alternatively, it can be provided at the end of all of the lessons.

A suggestion is to have the students write this and provide it to their classroom, homeroom, or advisory teacher for safe keeping, and then have it returned once a month for them to reflect on and write more.

EMBRACE CIVILITY STUDENT SURVEY ONLINE

VERSION

This survey is to find out about hurtful situations that may be occurring at (name of school), as well as student perspectives on hurtful behavior and positive relations. This survey is being conducted so that our school community can do a better job of fostering kindness, respect, and civility.

In this survey:

“Hurtful” includes situations that could be called bullying, harassment, disrespect or "put-downs," conflict or "drama," fighting, and the like.

“Online” means any use of digital technologies including sites or apps, using a computer or cell, while at school or outside of school.

“Parent” means parent or guardian.

It is your choice whether you want to do this survey. This survey is anonymous. No one will be able tell which responses are yours. Try to answer all of the questions. But you can skip any that you do not understand or do not feel like answering.

(Not to be included in the survey, the following questions are designated as Student Instruction (SI) or Assessment and Evaluation (AE). The AE data is not shared with students. The SI data should also be considered in the context of evaluation.

1. What words would you use to explain the concept of “civility?” (SI)

2. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree. The students at my school ... (SI)

SD - Strongly Disagree. D - Disagree. A - Agree. SA - Strongly Agree

Statement	SD	D	A	SA
Treat other students with kindness and respect while at school.				
Treat other students with kindness and respect while online.				
Step in to help if they see someone being hurtful at school.				
Step in to help if they see someone being hurtful online.				
Stop themselves, accept personal responsibility, and make things right if they were hurtful.				
Respond in a powerful and positive way if someone treats them badly.				
Think that if someone is hurtful to them and a school staff member sees this, the staff member will effectively help to make things better.				
Think that if someone is hurtful to them, reporting this to the school will result in making things better.				

3. In the last month, how frequently have you witnessed a student being hurtful to another student while at school? (AE and SI)

- Almost every day.
- Once or twice a week.
- Once or twice a month.
- Never.

4. In the last month, how frequently have you witnessed a student being hurtful to another student online? (AE and SI)

- Almost every day.
- Once or twice a week.
- Once or twice a month.
- Never.

5. What is your normal reaction if you see a student being hurtful or disrespectful to another? (SI)

- This happens all the time, so I generally just try to ignore it.
- The student who was treated badly probably deserved it.
- It usually is pretty funny.
- I do not like to see this happen.

6. What are the most important three reasons why you would not be hurtful to another student? (SI)

- How I would feel if someone did this to me or someone I care about.
- How I would feel about myself because of how this would reflect on me.
- It is against my values to be hurtful to others.
- How I would make the other student feel.
- What my parents, guardians, or other adults whose opinion I value would think.
- What my friends would think.
- What this would do to my reputation.
- That I might get into trouble.

7. What do you think about students who act in this way? (SI)

A - Admire. MF - Mixed Feelings. DNA - Do Not Admire.

Statement	A	MF	DNA
Are respectful and kind to others.			
Think it is "cool" to denigrate others.			
Create "drama" to get attention.			

Statement	A	MF	DNA
Reach out to help someone who has been treated badly.			
Ignore hurtful situations involving others.			
Laugh when seeing someone being treated badly.			
Help someone who is being treated badly leave the situation.			
Help other students resolve an argument or conflict.			
Encourage someone who is being hurtful.			
Tell someone being hurtful to stop.			
Help someone who was hurtful make things right.			
Were hurtful, but stopped and made things right.			
Were treated badly and retaliated.			
Were treated badly, but stood tall and responded in a positive way.			
Tell an adult if a situation is serious or has not stopped.			
Try to include someone who has been excluded.			
Encourage students to exclude those they consider "different."			

8. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree. The adults at my school ... (AE)

SD - Strongly Disagree. D - Disagree. A - Agree. SA - Strongly Agree

Statement	SD	D	A	SA
Treat all students with kindness and respect.				
Specifically reach out to include students who are sometimes excluded.				
Effectively help when they see a student is being treated badly at school.				
Effectively help if a student reports that someone is being hurtful to him or her at school.				
Effectively help if a student reports that someone is being hurtful to him or her online.				
Treat students as partners in creating positive relationships at school.				
Discipline students in a respectful way that does not humiliate them in front of others.				

9. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree. (AE)

SD - Strongly Disagree. D - Disagree. A - Agree. SA - Strongly Agree

Statement	SD	D	A	SA
My teachers notice when I am doing a good job and let me know about it.				
I can talk with my teachers and other staff members openly and freely about my concerns.				
Teachers and other staff members treat me with respect.				
There is at least one teacher or other staff member at school who really cares about me.				

10. In the last month, how frequently have you been hurtful to another student at school or online? (AE)

- Almost every day.
- Once or twice a week.
- Once or twice a month.
- Never.

11. If there was more than one incident, think about the incident that affected you the most. What had happened or what were you thinking at this time? (Skip this if you said “never.”) (AE)

- It was no big deal. It was just a prank.
- Everybody does it.
- Someone else encouraged me to do this.
- This person had been hurtful to me.
- What I did wasn't that bad.
- This student I was hurtful to deserved it.
- I acted too fast when I was angry and so I wasn't thinking.

12. In the last month, how frequently has any student in this school been hurtful to you? (AE)

- Almost every day.
- Once or twice a week.
- Once or twice a month.
- Never.

(Skip questions 10 to 15 if you said “never” on question 9.)

13. If there was more than one incident, think about the incident that affected you the most. How effective did you feel in getting this situation to stop? (AE)

- I was easily able to get this to stop.

_____ It was challenging, but possible, to get this to stop.

_____ It was very difficult to get this to stop.

_____ I felt powerless to get this to stop.

14. Again, think about the incident that affected you the most. Was a staff member present when this occurred? (AE)

_____ Yes.

_____ No.

15. If a staff member was present, what happened? (Skip if a staff member was not present.) (AE)

_____ Things got better.

_____ Things stayed the same.

_____ Things got better.

16. Again, think about the incident that affected you the most. Did you report this to the school? (AE)

_____ Yes.

_____ No.

17. If you reported this to a school staff member, what happened? (Skip if you did not report.) (AE)

_____ Things got better.

_____ Things stayed the same.

_____ Things got better.

18. If you did not report to a school staff member, why did you not report? (Skip if you did report.) (AE)

_____ It was a minor incident.

_____ I did not think a school staff member would do anything to help.

_____ I resolved the incident by myself.

_____ I thought that a school staff member might make things worse.

_____ The other student stopped being hurtful.

_____ I resolved the incident with help from my friend(s).

_____ I thought I would be blamed.

_____ Telling means I can't handle my own problems.

_____ Other students would have looked down on me for reporting.

_____ We have been told not to tattle.

_____ The student being hurtful would likely have retaliated.

_____ I probably deserved it.

_____ A school staff member saw this and did nothing.

_____ Other reasons:

19. How frequently are students at your school being treated in a hurtful manner because of the following or in the following ways? (AE and SI)

VF - Very Frequently. F - Frequently. NTF - Not That Frequently. AN - Almost Never

Statement	VF	F	NTF	AN
Different race or color.				
Came from a different country or speak a different language.				
Practice a different religion.				
Have a minority sexual orientation or identity or are perceived as having a minority sexual orientation or identity.				
Have a disability, difficulties learning, or difficulties interacting with other students.				
Based on body shape, size, or other appearance.				
Do not have much money.				
Wear clothes that are considered inappropriate.				
Behave in annoying ways.				
Behave in sexually provocative ways.				
Have been hurtful to another student.				
“Drama” or social conflict involving 2 or more people being hurtful.				
Related to social status and who is considered “cool” or “popular.”				
Sexual harassment.				
Related to dating or personal relationships.				
Controlling or abusive to someone within a dating relationship.				
Hate group or supremacy related.				
Gang related.				
Related to school athletics				
Related to school extracurricular activities.				
Hazing or hurtful initiations into a group.				
Who a person’s friends are.				

20. What words would you use to describe a person who steps in to help when he or she sees someone being excluded or treated badly? (SI)

21. If you wanted to reach out to be kind to someone who has been treated badly or was being left out, what would you do, say, or post? (SI)

22. If you wanted to tell a person who was being hurtful to stop, what would you likely say or post? (SI)

23. What would you **most likely want to do** if you saw someone being hurtful to another? (SI)

- Encourage the one being hurtful.
- Join in.
- Watch with interest.
- Tell others to watch.
- Ignore the situation.
- Reach out to the student who was treated badly.
- Help the student who was treated badly leave the situation.
- Privately tell the student or students being hurtful to stop.
- Publicly tell the student or students being hurtful to stop.
- Try to help students resolve an argument or conflict.
- Tell a school staff member.
- Tell my parent.
- File a report using the school reporting system.
- File an abuse report online.

24. Think of the most significant hurtful incident you saw at school or online in the last month. **What did you do?** (SI)

- Encouraged the one being hurtful.
- Joined in.
- Watched with interest.
- Told others to watch.
- Ignored the situation.
- Reached out to the student who was treated badly.
- Helped the student who was treated badly leave the situation.
- Privately told the student or students being hurtful to stop.
- Publicly told the student or students being hurtful to stop.
- Tried to help students resolve an argument or conflict.
- Told a school staff member.
- Told my parent.
- Filed a report using the school reporting system.
- Filed an abuse report online.

25. If in the situation in the prior question, you wanted to step in to help, **but did not**, why did you not? (Skip if you did help.) (SI)

- I didn't know what I could do.
- It was none of my business.
- It would not have been safe for me to do something.
- I could have failed.
- I was afraid I would embarrassed myself.
- Other students might have teased me if I tried to help.
- School staff is supposed to handle this.
- The student being treated badly likely deserved it.
- It wasn't that bad.
- Other students thought it was funny.
- I thought I should support my friend, even though he or she was being hurtful.
- I was afraid the student being hurtful would retaliate against me.
- It happened too fast and there just was not time.

26. How effective are these responses if someone is hurtful to you? (SI)

GE - Generally Effective. DC - Depends on the Circumstances. GNE - Generally Not Effective

Statement	GE	DC	GNE
Think to yourself, "I choose not to let this person control how I think about myself."			
Take a deep breath and calm down before you do anything.			
Talk with a friend before doing anything.			
Remember that this person wants attention, so don't give this person attention.			
Talk with a parent before doing anything.			
Talk with a school staff member before doing anything.			
Retaliate against this student.			
Apologize if you have also been hurtful.			
Get into a physical fight with this student.			
Ignore hurtful messages you receive.			
Ignore hurtful material posted publicly online.			
Walk away holding your head high.			

Statement	GE	DC	GNE
Try to forget it happened.			
Calmly and strongly tell this student to stop face-to-face.			
Calmly and strongly message this student telling him or her to stop.			
Asked a mutual friend to try to help.			
Ignore the person who was hurtful.			
Say hurtful things to this person			
Send hurtful messages to this student.			
Say hurtful things about this student to others.			
Publicly post hurtful things about this student online.			
Confront this student face-to-face, in anger, demanding this stop.			
Send this student an angry message demanding this stop			
File an abuse report online.			
Report to the school.			
Report to an anonymous online school safety tipline.			
Immediately respond, even if you are still angry.			
Reach out to be kind to someone else because there is just too much hurt in the world.			

EMBRACE CIVILITY STUDENT SURVEY

This survey is to find out about what students think about bullying and other forms of hurtful behavior. It is your choice whether you want to do this survey. This survey will be handled in way that will seek to keep your responses anonymous. Be sure not to put your name or any personal writings on the survey. After you complete the survey, fold it into fourths. The surveys will then be shuffled and handed out.

1. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree. The students at my school ...

SD - Strongly Disagree. D - Disagree. A - Agree. SA - Strongly Agree

Statement	SD	D	A	SA
Treat other students with kindness and respect while at school.				
Treat other students with kindness and respect while online.				
Step in to help if they see someone being hurtful at school.				
Step in to help if they see someone being hurtful online.				
Stop themselves, accept personal responsibility, and make things right if they were hurtful.				
Respond in a powerful and positive way if someone treats them badly.				

2. In the last month, how frequently have you witnessed a student being hurtful to another student while at school?

- Almost every day.
- Once or twice a week.
- Once or twice a month.
- Never.

3. In the last month, how frequently have you witnessed a student being hurtful to another student online?

- Almost every day.
- Once or twice a week.
- Once or twice a month.
- Never.

4. What is your normal reaction if you see a student being hurtful or disrespectful to another? (SI)

- This happens all the time, so I generally just try to ignore it.
- The student who was treated badly probably deserved it.
- It usually is pretty funny.
- I do not like to see this happen.

5. What are the most important three reasons why you would not be hurtful to another student?

- _____ How I would feel if someone did this to me or someone I care about.
- _____ How I would feel about myself because of how this would reflect on me.
- _____ It is against my values to be hurtful to others.
- _____ How I would make the other student feel.
- _____ What my parents, guardians, or other adults whose opinion I value would think.
- _____ What my friends would think.
- _____ What this would do to my reputation.
- _____ That I might get into trouble.

6. What do you think about a student who acts in this way?

A - Admire. MF - Mixed Feelings. DNA - Do Not Admire.

Statement	A	MF	DNA
Are respectful and kind to others.			
Think it is "cool" to put others down.			
Create "drama" to get attention.			
Reach out to help someone who has been treated badly.			
Ignore hurtful situations involving others.			
Laugh when seeing someone being treated badly.			
Help someone being treated badly leave the situation.			
Help other students resolve an argument or conflict.			
Encourage someone who is being hurtful.			
Tell someone being hurtful to stop.			
Help someone who was hurtful make things right.			
Were hurtful, but stopped and made things right.			
Were treated badly and retaliated.			
Were treated badly, but stood tall and responded in a positive way.			
Tell an adult if a situation is serious or has not stopped.			
Try to include someone who has been excluded.			
Encourage students to exclude those they consider "different."			

7. What would you **most likely want to do** if you saw someone being hurtful to another?

- Encourage the one being hurtful.
- Join in.
- Watch with interest.
- Tell others to watch.
- Ignore the situation.
- Reach out to the student who was treated badly.
- Help the student who was treated badly leave the situation.
- Privately tell the student or students being hurtful to stop.
- Publicly tell the student or students being hurtful to stop.
- Try to help students resolve an argument or conflict.
- Tell a school staff member.
- Tell my parent.
- File a report using the school reporting system.
- File an abuse report online.

8. Think of the most significant hurtful incident you saw at school or online in the last month. **What did you do?**

- Encouraged the one being hurtful.
- Joined in.
- Watched with interest.
- Told others to watch.
- Ignored the situation.
- Reached out to the student who was treated badly.
- Helped the student who was treated badly leave the situation.
- Privately told the student or students being hurtful to stop.
- Publicly told the student or students being hurtful to stop.
- Tried to help students resolve an argument or conflict.
- Told a school staff member.
- Told my parent.
- Filed a report using the school reporting system.
- Filed an abuse report online.

9. If in the situation in the prior question, you wanted to step in to help, **but did not**, why did you not? (Skip if you did help.)

- I didn't know what I could do.
- It was none of my business.

- _____ It would not have been safe for me to do something.
- _____ I could have failed and embarrassed myself.
- _____ Other students might have teased me if I tried to help.
- _____ School staff is supposed to handle this.
- _____ The student being treated badly likely deserved it.
- _____ I wanted to support my friend, even though he or she was being hurtful.
- _____ I was afraid the student being hurtful would retaliate against me.
- _____ It happened too fast and there just was not time.

10. Think of a recent time when you were hurtful to someone, even just a little. What had happened or what were you thinking at this time? (Skip this question if you cannot remember a time when you were hurtful.)

- _____ It was no big deal. It was just a prank.
- _____ Everybody does it.
- _____ Someone else encouraged me to do this.
- _____ This person had been hurtful to me.
- _____ What I did wasn't that bad.
- _____ This student I was hurtful to deserved it.
- _____ I acted too fast when I was angry and so I wasn't thinking.

11. How effective are these responses if someone is hurtful to you?

GE - Generally Effective. DC - Depends on the Circumstances. GNE - Generally Not Effective

Statement	GE	DC	GNE
Think to yourself, "I choose not to let this person control how I think about myself."			
Take a deep breath and calm down before you do anything.			
Talk with a friend before doing anything.			
Remember that this person wants attention, so don't give this person attention.			
Talk with a parent before doing anything.			
Talk with a school staff member before doing anything.			
Retaliate against this student.			
Apologize if you have also been hurtful.			
Get into a physical fight with this student.			
Ignore hurtful messages you receive.			

Statement	GE	DC	GNE
Ignore hurtful material posted publicly online.			
Walk away holding your head high.			
Try to forget it happened.			
Calmly and strongly tell this student to stop face-to-face.			
Calmly and strongly message this student telling him or her to stop.			
Asked a mutual friend to try to help.			
Ignore the person who was hurtful.			
Say hurtful things to this person			
Send hurtful messages to this student.			
Say hurtful things about this student to others.			
Publicly post hurtful things about this student online.			
Confront this student face-to-face, in anger, demanding this stop.			
Send this student an angry message demanding this stop			
File an abuse report online.			
Report to the school.			
Report to an anonymous online school safety tipline.			
Immediately respond, even if you are still angry.			
Reach out to be kind to someone else because there is just too much hurt in the world.			

Think Things Through

What can you do to help your school community support kindness and inclusion and embrace civility?

Think of a time when you saw someone being treated badly and you wanted to step in to help, but didn't. Why didn't you?

What might you do differently now?

Think of a time when you saw that someone was being treated badly and you reached out to be kind. What did you do to reach out to be kind?

What happened?

What did you learn from this experience that can help you reach out to be kind again in the future?

Think of a time when you saw that a friend was being hurtful.

Did you try to help your friend stop, own it, and fix it?

If you did, what happened?

If you didn't, what held you back?

What did you learn from this experience that can help you help someone else stop, own it, and fix it in the future?

Think of a time when you saw something happening that you thought was seriously wrong, when someone was or could get hurt. Did you report this situation to an adult who could help?

If you did, what happened?

If you didn't, what held you back?

What did you learn from this experience that can help you recognize when something is really serious that should be reported and how to do so effectively?

What are the most important reasons that you would not be hurtful?

Think of a time when you made a mistake and were hurtful.

Did you stop, own it, and fix it?

If you did stop, own it, and fix it, what happened?

If you didn't stop, own it, and fix it, what held you back?

What commitments do you make for the future if you make a mistake and are hurtful to another?

If someone is hurtful to you, what are some ways you could respond that use your personal strengths?

What are the special and unique things that make you the truly AWESOME person you are?

Each month, you will be provided with this document. Please write some of your thoughts on some things that happened during the month that relates to any of the above questions, noting:

- What happened?
- What role or roles did you play?
- What did you think of how you played that role or roles at the time?
- What did you think of how you played that role or roles later?
- What are the most important things that you learned from this experience?

Embrace Civility

Character Strengths Inventory

Think about who you are as a person. Indicate whether each Strength is very much like you, often like you, at times like you, not often like you, or not at all like you. Realize that people have different strengths and that you can choose to build new strengths throughout your life.

Strength	Description	Very Much Like Me	Often Like me	At Times Like Me	Not Often Like Me	Not At All Like Me
Creativity	I like to think of new and better ways of doing things.					
Curiosity	I am always asking questions and love to discover new things.					
Judgment	I look at all sides of an issue to come up with the right answer.					
Love of learning	I love to learn new things.					
Wisdom	I am considered wise because I evaluate things from different perspectives.					
Bravery	I speak up for what is right, even if others do not agree with me.					
Perseverance	I finish what I start, even if it becomes difficult.					
Honesty	I speak the truth and I take responsibility for my feelings and behaviors.					
Zest	I live life as an adventure filled with excitement and energy.					
Love	I value the close relationships I have with others.					
Kindness	I enjoy helping others, even if I do not know them well.					
Social intelligence	I pay attention to the motives and feelings of others.					
Teamwork	I always do my share and I work hard for the success of my group.					

Strength	Description	Very Much Like Me	Often Like me	At Times Like Me	Not Often Like Me	Not At All Like Me
Fairness	I treat all people in a fair and just manner.					
Leadership	I am good at providing leadership and direction when I am with a group of people.					
Forgiveness	I am willing to forgive someone who has done something wrong.					
Humility	I am humble and let my actions speak more than my words.					
Prudence	I am careful about what I do and strive not to do things I might later regret.					
Self-control	I pay attention and am always in control of what I do and say.					
Appreciation of excellence	I appreciate the beautiful and wonderful things in life.					
Gratitude	I pay attention to the good things that happen to me and express my thanks.					
Hope	I believe that good things are coming to me now.					
Humor	I like to laugh, smile, and see the good in all situations.					
Spirituality	I feel my life has a higher purpose that fits within the larger meaning of life.					

Looking over this list, what do you think are your five most important or significant strengths?

Looking over this list, what are the strengths you would most like to develop?

These Character Strengths were first included in Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. This inventory of strengths was developed based on material from the VIA Institute on Character. A more comprehensive survey of personal strengths is available on their web site. © Copyright 2004-2014, VIA Institute on Character. Used with permission. All rights reserved. <http://www.viacharacter.org>.