



Bullies, Victims, and Bystanders

The Bullying Game: Bullying can be seen as a destructive game, devised by the bully. The rules are simple:

- The bully decides when to start the game, where it will be played, and who is allowed to watch.
- The bully picks the players.
- The bully sets the stakes: He or she can demand to control territory, objects, or privileges. But the real “fun” comes from showing that he or she has the power to control the people around him or her.
- Bystanders must accept or encourage what the bully does.
- The first round of the game is over when the bully wins. Then the bully can play again.
- The bully can play the game as often as he or she likes, for as long as the fun lasts.

These are the bully’s rules. But what if you don’t follow them? The bully doesn’t have a game—unless you play it.

What Would Happen If?

Bullies like to set the rules and they expect them to be followed. But what would happen if the rules changed: if a victim didn’t accept his or her punishment, or a bystander did more than stand by?

This activity is designed to help both victims and bystanders end the bullying game, by finding new ways to respond to the bully. It empowers children to change the rules, see available options, and appreciate how their actions can make a difference.

- 1** Pick the story (on next two pages) that is most appropriate for your group.
- 2** Read it aloud.
- 3** Ask children to discuss *What would happen if... ?*

This activity will help children...

Realize that behaviors involved in bullying are largely predictable

See how their actions can either encourage or stop bullying

Think of specific ways to change the bullying game, in particular situations