



## Instructor Guide

### Unit 5: Lesson 1 Bullying Vs Social Conflict

#### Lesson Objective:

- The child will be able to define the three qualities that comprise “bullying.”
- The child will use critical thinking to identify how normal social conflict differs from bullying.

**Fundamental Skills or Competencies:** Social awareness, Perspective-taking, Responsible decision-making, Critical thinking, Impulse control

**Time Needed:** It is flexible and depends on which activities you choose.

**Materials Needed:** *Note: Please skip ads wherever they pop up before watching videos.*

- Video clip from Encanto: Mirabel and Isabella Argument scene (2:00)  
<https://youtu.be/UJig51VfoZY>
- Video clip from Harry Potter: Draco Malfoy Says His Family Is Better (0:55)  
<https://youtu.be/x8kshJO2PG0>
- Screen on which to project video clips
- Kid video for 5-1 Bullying vs. Social Conflict
- Play-Doh or clay for activity on broadening the definition of beautiful bodies
- 5-1-3 Quick Guide to Breakout Activities for Bullying vs Social Conflict
- 5-1-4 Sharing Circle Script for Bullying vs. Social Conflict
- 5-1-5 Defining Bullying information sheet (take-home resource for parents),
- 5-1-6 Scenarios for Bullying vs Social Conflict (print and cut out scenario cards)
- 5-1-7 Fighting Friends Case Study (1 per child)
- 5-1-8 Assessment for Bullying vs Social Conflict
- pens
- For visual art activities:
  - Brightly-colored sheets of tissue paper
  - Glue or glue sticks
  - Cardstock paper
  - Butcher-block paper for tracing children
  - Pencils and markers
- A copy of the following picture books to read aloud:
  - [The Recess Queen by Alexis O'Neill](#)
  - [Spaghetti in a Hot Dog Bun: Having the Courage to Be Who You Are by Maria Dismondy](#)
  - [Ella the Elegant Elephant by Carmelo D'amico](#)

#### Part One: Watch Video on Bullying vs. Social Conflict

Start by watching the ***Bullying vs. Social Conflict Video for Kids***. If kids have trouble focusing, invite them to do 25 jumping jacks or another burst of intense physical activity for one minute before starting the video.

## Part Two: Discussions on Bullying vs. Social Conflict

**Lesson Essential Questions:** Knowing the difference between bullying and “normal social conflict” helps us to organize appropriate responses. How do we know which behaviors comprise actual bullying, and which behaviors are part of normal social conflict?

**Introduction or Hook to Engage Students:** Ask students the following question: *Raise your hand if a friend has done something mean to you. Raise your hand if you have done something mean to a friend. “Mean” is a complicated concept, isn’t it? What feels mean to you might not seem mean to someone else. How do you know the difference between mean behaviors that are bullying and those that are part of normal social conflict?*

### Discussion of Key Teaching Concepts About Bullying vs Social Conflict:

**Key Concept One: It can be hard to know what is happening when someone hurts your feelings. But there is a difference between bullying and social conflict.**

- Sometimes it can be hard to tell if someone is just being mean or rude, or if you are actually being bullied. When your feelings are hurt, everything can feel pretty bad. But it’s important to understand that there is a difference between bullying and normal social conflict.

**Key Concept Two: True bullying has three conditions, and all three must be happening at the same time for a situation to be bullying.**

- **First, bullying is repetitive.** This means someone is repeatedly harming, threatening, or taunting you. It’s not just one bad day at lunch or recess; it is happening over and over again. For example, in the Harry Potter series, Draco Malfoy repeatedly calls Hermione Granger unkind names and makes fun of her for being Muggle-born.
- **Second, bullying is unwanted.** If another kid teases you, and you do not like it, then you are experiencing unwanted aggression. By the way, it’s very common for other kids to say, “I was just kidding,” when you tell them to stop. The best way for you to respond is to say, “Kidding means **both** people are having fun. Now that you know **I’m** not having fun, don’t do that again.”
- **Third, bullying always includes a power imbalance.** The person or the people bullying you have the power to make other people join in and be mean to you, too. It might be because they are bigger, or older, or perhaps more popular. They might have more privilege than you, or more money.

### Mini activity to demonstrate what a power imbalance looks like

- Tell students, “In the Harry Potter series, the Malfoy family had more money than the Weasleys, and the Malfoys always used that source of power against the Weasleys. The Malfoys believe that they are better than the Weasleys because they have more money. Let’s watch a video clip where Draco Malfoy tries to use his power.”
- Play video clip called “*Draco Malfoy Introduces Himself to Harry Potter* (0:55)  
<https://youtu.be/x8kshJO2PG0>
- Ask children how they feel when they listen to Draco Malfoy talk about the Weasleys.

### **Key Concept Three: Being bullied creates strong feelings of fear.**

- One of the ways you will know if you are being bullied is you will start to feel afraid and you often want to avoid the place where the bullying is happening. You might feel afraid to go to school or to sports practice or outside to play in your neighborhood.
- This is why you need to ask a grown up for help. You usually can't make the bullying stop on your own, and that is not your fault.
- If all three of these things are happening to you – someone repeatedly attacks you; you don't want them to do this, and they have more power than you, so you can't make the mean behavior stop, then you are being bullied.
- If you are doing all three of these things to someone else, then you are bullying them, and it is not okay.

### **Key Concept Four: Normal social conflict is different from bullying because there is no power imbalance.**

- Conflict is a normal part of life, because we will not always agree with other people about the things we want, what we think, or what we want to do. Sometimes, you will feel really angry during a conflict, and you might say mean things or even lash out. But neither person is afraid of the other person. For example, you might have a conflict with your best friend, and it feels terrible, but you aren't afraid that your friend will try to get everyone else to kick you out of the friend group.
- For example, Hermione Granger has conflicts with her best friends, Ron and Harry. They disagree and they get mad at each other. But they always talk it out, and none of them is afraid that the others will try to take away their other friends. Here's what you need to remember: conflict is normal, but bullying is not.
- **Conflict** is a struggle between two or more people who believe they have different goals or desires. Conflict occurs naturally as we interact with one another. It is a normal part of life that we will not always agree with other people about the things we want, what we think, or what we want to do. Many conflicts arise in the moment because people with the same relative amount of power see the same situation from two different points of view.

### **Key Concept Five: If you confuse actual bullying with normal social conflict, you may not know when to ask for the right type of help.**

- In normal social conflict -- where no one is afraid of the other person -- it is best for you to work directly with each other to come up with your own solutions, and the adults should only provide advice as needed.
- In actual bullying, however, adults often need to actively intervene, because a power imbalance exists that limits the target's ability to make the mean behaviors stop. Telling a traumatized student to make the bullying stop on his or her own is often asking the impossible.

**Key Concept Six: Sometimes normal social conflict deteriorates into bullying when kids do not know how to resolve conflict by talking with each other respectfully about what is really the problem.**

- An example of conflict turning into bullying: Sarah is jealous of Naomi because Naomi is the best dancer in their class. Instead of working through her feelings of jealousy or working on her own dancing skills, Sarah starts cruel rumors about the Naomi and gets all the kids to exclude Naomi from social events. Sarah is trying to hurt Naomi to make herself feel better.

### **Part Three: Activity Options**

- \*For a one-page brief summary of quick activity options, please see *5-1-3 Quick Guide to Breakout Activity Options for Bullying vs Social Conflict*.

#### **Activity Option 1: Fighting Friends Case Study: Bullying or Social Conflict?**

Print and distribute *5-1-7 Fighting Friends Case Study*. You may also choose to project the worksheet on a large screen.

- Tell children, “I’m going to read aloud two different short stories. They will both involve the same characters, but the outcomes will be different. I want you to listen to each story and imagine how you would be feeling if you were the main characters. I want you to think about whether you would classify each situation as bullying or as normal social conflict.”
- Hand out paper and crayons or markers and tell children, “Draw how you feel inside while listening to each story. What color do you feel? What shape? If you want, you can write down the words and emotions that come to your mind.”

#### **Read aloud:**

**Fighting Friends Story A:** Maria and Jordan have been best friends for a long time. A new student named Sam joins their class partway through the school year. (Sam could be male, female or nonbinary). Maria and Sam quickly begin hanging out together all the time, and Jordan feels jealous.

Jordan’s anger simmers when Maria cancels their plans to go to the movies with Sam, and Jordan feels a strong desire to hurt Maria. Jordan starts rumors about Maria and urges mutual friends to ostracize Maria. When Maria sits down at the lunch table, Jordan encourages everyone else to switch tables. Jordan and a group of other kids surround Maria at recess and make fun of her body size, saying that she should buy her clothes a size bigger.

Maria starts to miss school, claiming she is ill. When Maria reports the situation to the school’s social worker, Jordan says, “I was just kidding.” The rumors continue, and Maria’s parents contact the school.

\* \* \* \*

## Read aloud:

**Fighting Friends Story B:** Maria and Jordan have been best friends for a long time. A new student named Sam joins their class partway through the school year. (Sam could be male, female or nonbinary). Maria and Sam quickly begin hanging out together all the time, and Jordan feels jealous. The situation gets worse when Maria cancels plans with Jordan to go to the movies with Sam.

Jordan confronts Maria in the hallway at school and shouts at her that she is a bad friend. Maria grows defensive and shouts back at Jordan. The two kids refuse to speak to each other for the next few days. They send angry emojis back and forth and roll their eyes at each other in school. They do not force their friends to take sides.

The following week, Jordan asks Maria to meet during lunch. Jordan apologizes for shouting at Maria in the hallway. “I miss spending time together, and I wish you had invited me to join you and Sam at the movie instead of canceling plans on me,” Jordan said.

Maria apologizes for leaving Jordan out and explains that she will do a better job of balancing her time, because she cares about Jordan. The kids agree to find some special time each week to spend time with each other.

\* \* \* \*

After reading the stories, discuss the following questions as a group:

- Both scenarios involve some “mean” behaviors. Which scenario is bullying? Which is social conflict?
- What behaviors were examples of bullying?
- How did you feel listening to each story?

## Activity Option 2: Scenario Cards: Bullying or Social Conflict?

- The instructor will cut up the sheet(s) of character cards along the dotted lines.
- For primary students, the instructor can read aloud each card to the group as a whole and invite children to discuss whether the situation is bullying or social conflict. To make it more interactive, you might designate one side of the room for “bullying” and the other side of the room for “social conflict” and invite the children to move to the side of the room that they think fits the scenario. Invite someone to give their reasoning after each card.
- For older children that can read independently, the instructor will put the children into groups of 2-4 and hand one scenario card to each pair. The children will read the scenario and decide if it’s bullying or social conflict. Every few minutes, each group will trade cards with another group and discuss a new scenario. Continue until every group has had a chance to look at each scenario.

### Activity Option 3: Broadening the definition of what it means to have a beautiful body

- Open the activity with a discussion. One of the most common types of bullying is appearance-based bullying. The widespread use of social media has created a culture where kids learn from the youngest ages that their appearance is often judged.
- Ask kids, “Why do you think people are so focused on outward appearances?”
- Tell kids, “Many models, actors and celebrities look similar to each other. They often have similar bodies; they rarely use wheelchairs or canes; they are often tall; they don’t have many wrinkles; they tend to have perfect skin and hair and makeup.” Ask kids, “What types of appearances do you see the most often on TV and on YouTube? What types of people do you see less often?”
- In this activity, children will use Play-Doh or clay to create a mini figurine that represents a person who will star in an upcoming superhero movie. Encourage kids to create a figurine that looks different from the types of bodies usually seen in the media.
- Examples of broadening the definition of beautiful bodies could include:
  - different body weight or shape
  - different body height or stature
  - wears glasses or hearing aids
  - uses crutches, a cane, a walker, or a wheelchair
  - limb differences (uses a prosthetic limb or has a missing limb)
  - has a feeding tube, an oxygen tube, or an insulin pump
  - has birthmarks, scars, vitiligo or other skin differences
- After the kids have created their superhero figurines, circle up and invite each child to show their clay figurine and talk about why their figurine is beautiful and what makes that character a good superhero. Differences should be highlighted as sources of strength and value.
- Time permitting, kids can break into groups of 3-4 and make a pretend scene from a stop action movie that features their figurines.

### Activity Option 4: Watch video clip from *Encanto* and hold discussion.

- Before watching, tell the children: “Social conflict happens when two people have different goals and they struggle to get the outcome they want. In the movie *Encanto*, Mirabel and Isabella are sisters in the magical Madrigal family. Mirabel is the only person in the family who doesn’t have a magical gift. Mirabel is jealous of Isabella, who is beautiful and expected to be perfect in every way, and Isabella is jealous of Mirabel because she doesn’t have the constant pressures of being magical.”
- As a group, watch the video clip of *Mirabel and Isabella Argument Scene* (2:00), and please remember to choose “skip ads” on the video:  
<https://youtu.be/UJig51VfoZY>
- After watching, ask the kids the following questions:
  1. How does Mirabel react when Isabella asks her to apologize?
  2. Why is it hard to apologize to someone before you have really talked through the conflict?
  3. Both Mirabel and Isabella think the other sister has it easier. Have you ever had a sibling or a friend who you think has it easier than you? How does that affect your relationship?
- Invite children to create a skit about what might have happened if Mirabel and Isabella could switch magically places with each other for a day and live in each other’s bodies.

**Activity Option 5: Reading aloud activity:** We recommend the following books that embody the themes of this lesson plan. After reading each book aloud, ask the children how it relates to the idea of bullying or normal social conflict. Children may draw pictures of the story as they listen.

- [The Recess Queen by Alexis O'Neill](#)
- [Spaghetti in a Hot Dog Bun: Having the Courage to Be Who You Are by Maria Dismondy](#)
- [Ella the Elegant Elephant by Carmelo D'amico](#)

**Activity Option 6: Physical activity:** The children will explore how to work through social conflict while playing physical games.

1. **My Ball, Your Ball:** You need 3 hula hoops and a lot of tennis balls. Divide children into three teams. Lay three hula hoops on the ground and put the same number of balls in each hula hoop. Teams have 2 minutes to “steal” balls from other teams’ hula hoops and place them inside their own hoop. Team with the most balls after two minutes wins. Repeat.
2. **Communication Relay Race:** Divide kids into two lines. Set up two cones about 25 feet away from kids. Kids will each take a turn running around the cone and back *while facing backwards or while wearing a blindfold*. The rest of the kids on the team will communicate to the runner how far to go and when to turn around. The first team to have everyone finish wins.
3. **Architects and Bulldozers:** There are two teams – Architects and Bulldozers. Set up a lot of cones in a wide-open space. When you call “go”, the Bulldozers race onto the field to knock over cones, using their hands only. The Architects race to put the cones back upright. Each player keeps track of their own points (1 point for each cone either knocked over or picked up). After 5 minutes, teams stop and add up their points. Honesty is important. The team with the most points wins.

**Activity Option 7: Drama/Theater activity:** The children will create skits about this week’s theme, which is *Bullying vs Social Conflict*. Below are prompts.

- **Bake sale buddies:** You and your friends are planning a healthy bake sale (whole grain muffins, fruit and protein bars, high fiber cookies, etc.) to raise money for a children’s hospital. Everyone is arguing about who will be partnered up to work together on baking items. Nobody wants to be partners with Tracy, who is upset. How does it all work out?
- **Camp conflict:** Two old friends – Ben and Ash - are attending the same summer camp. At camp, Ash becomes friends with a new group of popular kids. Ash tries to include Ben but the popular kids don’t like Ben and try to push Ben out. What happens?

**Activity Option 8: Visual Art activity:** Kids will do art projects that are affirming and supportive.

- **Body full of wonder:** Each child lays on butcher paper while an adult or peer traces their outline. Children identify positive words about themselves to write or draw in their own outlines. Then children go around the room and write one positive word or draw one positive image that applies to the other children in their outlines. Kids can decorate their tracings.
- **Tissue paper collage of new self-image:** Provide children with a piece of cardstock, glue, and sheets of brightly-colored tissue paper. Have children imagine that each piece of tissue paper represents their insecurities and negative self-thoughts. Children will rip tissue paper into small pieces to destroy negative thoughts and recreate a new, positive whole self-image by gluing the ripped-up pieces onto a piece of cardstock and making something beautiful.

## **Activity Option 9: Hold a full group Sharing Circle to discuss the Bullying vs Social Conflict.**

- Please use the complete guided script for facilitators labeled *5-1-4 Sharing Circle Script on Bullying vs Social Conflict*. Allow 20-35 minutes for this activity, depending on how many rounds you complete and how large the circle is.

**Closure:** Remind the students to use critical thinking in determining whether they are involved in a bullying relationship or a normal social conflict. Be aware that normal social conflict situations can deteriorate into bullying if people do not talk their problems out.

### **Part Four: Assessment**

If you want to do a formal assessment at the end, hand out one printed copy to each child of *5-1-8 Assessment for Bullying vs. Normal Social Conflict*. Ask the children to answer the questions and do the written exercise. For primary students, you can talk through this assessment as a discussion or have them draw pictures.

ANSWERS: The correct answers are indicated in bold.

1. Normal social conflict does not include:
  - a) Unwanted behaviors
  - b) A power imbalance**
  - c) Hurt feelings
2. True or False: When a friend is mad at you and does something unkind to you, this is always a form of bullying.
  - a) True
  - b) False**

**Accommodations/Modifications** for diverse learners in your classroom: Allow children to talk through activities rather than write or draw their responses. Some children, especially those who have been targeted by bullies, might need emotional support to cope with feelings of sadness, fear, or anger that are triggered during discussions about bullying. Be prepared for increased reports of social aggression as children try to make sense of their own situations.

### **Additional examples of Bullying and Social Conflict in Harry Potter:**

#### Harry Potter Bullying Scenario

In *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, during one of Hagrid's Care of Magical Creatures classes, Draco Malfoy taunts Buckbeak, a Hippogriff. Buckbeak responds by attacking Draco and injuring his arm. Draco and his powerful family use the incident to wage a campaign against Hagrid. They spread rumors and lies about Hagrid's teaching abilities, and they portray Buckbeak as a vicious threat. For months, Hagrid suffers under their relentless campaign against him. A committee of Malfoy's friends is given the power to determine that Hagrid is guilty of a crime and should be sent to Azkaban, and Buckbeak is sentenced to death.

### Harry Potter Social Conflict Scenario

In Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire, Harry's name is mysteriously entered in to the Goblet as a competitor in the prestigious TriWizard tournament. Ron, who has long been jealous of his famous friend, doesn't believe Harry when Harry insists he doesn't know how his name was entered. He accuses Harry of lying and refuses to talk to him. Harry responds by growing equally angry, and the two boys spend several weeks in misery until they eventually talk it out after the tournament's first task.

### **Supplemental Reading:**

*Why Telling Victims of Bullying to Just Fight Back Doesn't Work*

<https://www.cnn.com/2012/10/31/living/bullying-fight-back/index.html>

This article may be instructive for parents as well as staff.

Additional fictional texts for older kids and parents:

1. *Super Sons #1* by Peter J. Tomasi and Jorge Jimenez
2. *Avengers: No More Bullying # 1* by Sean Ryan et al.

This Avengers comic features Sam Wilson, who is African-American, as Captain America, a storyline which is also featured in the film *Avengers: Endgame*. This comic and the film introduce the concept of Steve Rogers (the first Captain America) passing on his shield to Sam Wilson to become the new Captain America. Thus, this comic achieves the goal of using pop culture to address bullying and features a Black superhero.