



Look Around...The Victim

Victims often respond to bullies' demands with either passive submission or retaliatory aggression—rather than with self-confidence and assertiveness.

ASSERTIVENESS means expressing one's feelings and defending one's rights while respecting the feelings and rights of others.

Potential victims can protect themselves by learning to respond assertively. Assertive responses neither provoke the bully nor reward him or her with submission. An assertive manner also provides a child with an air of self-confidence and a sense of control that can deter a bully's approach from the start. Role-playing exercises help children use body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, and words to respond assertively to a bully.

Standing Up

- 1** Review the chart *Bullying Actions and Victim Responses* (page 19) in advance. Select one or two examples from the *Bullying* (Provoking) column that fit your children's ages and circumstances. Feel free to adapt and/or embellish the scenarios, or add your own examples.
- 2** Explain that there are three ways to respond to a bully: by *Giving In* (Submissive), *Hurting Back* (Aggressive), and *Standing Up* (Assertive). Define *Standing Up*, referring to the definition of assertiveness above. Explain and discuss why *Standing Up* is usually more effective in preventing or stopping bullying than the other two types of responses. Review *Tips for Standing Up to Bullies* (next page).
- 3** Have another adult assume the role of the Bully while you demonstrate the types of responses. Make sure to exaggerate the differences between them.
- 4** Have the children watch, describe, and imitate your nonverbal communication (e.g., posture, eye contact, facial expression, tone of voice), as well as your words and actions.
- 5** Recruit a child volunteer to role-play the Victim. Encourage the volunteer to use his or her own words and to practice the response several times—each time improving it based on feedback from the group.

This activity will...

Help children understand differences between submissive, aggressive, and assertive behaviors

Give children guidance and practice in responding to a bully's provocations with verbal and nonverbal assertiveness

Look Around...The Victim**Looking Bullies in the Eye:
Tips for Standing Up to Bullies**

- Take a deep breath and let the air out slowly.
- Sit or stand tall, head up.
- Keep your hands at your sides rather than on your hips or folded across your chest.
- Have a relaxed and purposeful facial expression, not angry or laughing.
- Maintain eye contact.
- Speak with a calm voice, loud enough to be heard clearly.
- Use non-provocative words and a confident tone of voice.
- Avoid name-calling or making threats.
- Avoid finger pointing or other threatening gestures.
- Reply briefly and directly.
- Avoid bringing up past grudges or making generalizations (*You always...*).

**EYE
OPENER**

Each day, **160,000** children in the United States stay home from school for fear of being bullied.⁶

One way to help children escape their victim role is to change their outlook from one of *helplessness*—there is nothing that can be done to stop the bully—to one of *confidence*—there are specific things that victims, bystanders, and adults *can do* to stop the bully. Each time a child practices an assertive response, fearful and helpless thoughts are replaced by strong and confident ones.



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Bullying Actions and Victim Responses

Bullying (Provoking)	Giving In (Submissive)	Hurting Back (Aggressive)	Standing Up (Assertive)
Bully roughly cuts in line in front of Victim.	Victim steps back, puts head down, and says nothing.	Victim shoves Bully out of line and says, "You jerk!"	Victim stands tall and says, "This is my place. No cutting allowed."
Bully grabs a candy bar that Victim is holding. "Give me that!"	Victim lets Bully take the candy bar and timidly says, "O.K."	Victim screams and kicks Bully.	Victim firmly holds on to the candy bar and says, "Sorry, but this is mine."
Bully laughs and points at Victim and chants, "Loser, Loser, Loser!"	Victim looks upset and starts to cry.	Victim angrily replies, "Your mother is ugly."	Victim calmly looks at Bully and says, "You're just wasting your breath trying to make me mad."
Bully whispers to pals, "If you want to be my friend, you can't play with (name of Victim)."	Victim finds out, sits alone at a table and says, "I guess I have to eat by myself."	Victim finds out and tells a nasty rumor about Bully.	Victim talks privately with Bully and says, "I know you're talking about me behind my back, and I don't like it."
Bully tells Victim, "You stink on first base. I'm taking over. Out of my way, stupid."	Victim says, "Sorry I messed up," and hands his glove to the Bully.	Victim shouts, "Who are you calling stupid, you big moron!"	Victim stays on base and says, "I'm playing first base for the rest of the game."