

## **Bullying and Conflict Resolution through Drama**

*“The power which comes from names and naming is related directly to the power to define others—individuals, races, sexes, ethnic groups. Our identities... are greatly affected by the names we are called and the words with which we are labeled.”*

*~Haig Bosmajian, The Language of Oppression*

**Goal** (overall): To develop ownership over various facets of human interaction and socialization. To address bullying and student conflict using Forum Theatre.

### **Lesson Objectives:**

- Students will be able to create and perform characters based on real life situations.
- Students will be able to create a theatrical performance that explores issues of bullying and human rights.
- Students will actively participate in “forum theatre.”
- Students will be able to identify factual information about bullying and collaboratively create their own definition.
- Students and teachers will connect to ideals of Restorative Justice and foster the meaning of circles.

### **Instructional Outline:**

#### **Question & Answer (information gathering):**

Hot Corners—

Teacher will ask questions related to bullying and being “different” and students will physically move to separate corners of the room signifying “strongly agree,” “somewhat agree,” or “disagree”

(Examples: I have watched a classmate get made fun of this year. I like to wear clothes that make me different from others. I have made fun of a classmate and felt guilty about it later, etc...)

#### **Warm-up Activity:**

Class will be broken up into small groups (4 students in each group- ADD students will be grouped with typical learners). They will each be given a scenario with no specific ending and will be asked to create a short scene based on the scenario they were given.

Examples:

- It is your first week at summer camp and there is one older kid who keeps making fun of you and getting on your case. You tell the counselor, call your parents, but nothing seems to work.
- You are at school and one group of girls keeps telling you that you can't sit with them at lunch without any reason. You try to fit in by dressing like them and talking like them, but nothing seems to work.

**Prep Activity:**

Students will rehearse their scenes and be ready to perform.

**Main Activity:**

Present the scenes in a “forum.” Students will be able to freeze the scene and enter with a different possible solution. (Students can only take the place of the “victim” to try to end the scenario in a more successful way. Other students in the scene will improv and go along with the new actor.)

\*ADD students will be kept focused because they will not simply be watching scenes—they will be active participants, ready to jump in.

**Question & Answer (thinking & feeling):**

Question students and discover along the way during main activity. In between each scene, ask the class what new actor did differently. Did it work? What would you do?

**Closure:**

After the scenes have been presented, students will sit in circle and we will have short discussion. What does it mean to be bullied? What happens if you have a conflict with a friend? How does it feel?

Teacher will write definition on board and ask class what they want to add. Class will then make their own definition of bullying to be referred to during the unit.

*The National School Safety Center defines bullying as "a form of violence that hurts others." Bullies use negative actions intentionally and repeatedly to hurt others, either physically or emotionally, and to exert power over them.*

**Follow-up Assignment:**

Now that students have understood some effects and solutions of bullying, have them turn to the internet and cyber-bullying. They should research and find one example or article of a situation when cyber-bullying occurred. They can use the internet or magazine/newspaper.

**Additional Information:**

Materials Needed: Small pieces of papers with scenarios

Assessment & Reflections: Do the students actively respond to discussion about bullying? Do students create believable characters?

Lesson Extenders: Scenes could be presented to a large school audience and have the viewers jump in to change the endings/solutions. This could raise more awareness towards bullying in a larger level than simply the drama classroom.

Potential Challenges: It is possible students will not want to jump into another scene to solve the problem. Teacher can be flexible and freeze the scenes and ask for volunteers if they are slow to join in.