

Session 5

Personal Safety: Handling taunting/ bullying

Rationale

Children are often taunted and bullied by their peers, older children and at times by adults. They have a few ways of handling such incidents, ranging from retaliation, complaining to someone in authority, ignoring the taunts and at times, internalizing the damaging message. This can reduce a child's self-esteem. We need to help children understand that words, like the deeds of a person, describe and tell others about the character and personality of the person doing the taunting.

Materials required

- Marker pen
- Any sticking substance (Blu Tac / double sided sticking tape / cello tape / board pins)
- Session worksheets/charts/Activity sheets

Objectives of session 5

To impart and help children internalize the following messages:

Core message 1: My skills are more important than my looks.

Core Message 2: the words people use and their acts (behavior) tells us about the character and behavior of those people.

Core message 3: I can respect people for their skills, intelligences and behavior and show my respect in the way I behave with them.

Core Message 4: As a bystander I can help stop taunting/ bullying

Core message 1: My skills are more important than my looks.

Tell a story: Ashtavakra was deformed in eight places and hence came to be known as 'Ashtavakra'. His grandfather Uddalaka took up the responsibility of his education. Ashtavakra was brilliant and by the time he was 11 years old, he was a complete scholar. His friends teased him about his body but he never cared. He said 'It doesn't matter how I look. See how much I know. Can you compete with me?' The King held a competition to determine who is the wisest person in his kingdom. Ashtavakra also went. He reached slowly because he could not walk upright. When he reached the court, the people at the court and other competitors all laughed at him. Ashtavakra said to the king – "I want to ask a question" The King said "ask". The court fell silent. Ashtavakra asked "Oh King whom are these people laughing at? The Creator or the creation? My Body or the one who made my body?" All the people realized their mistake and felt ashamed. The King recognized Ashtavakra as the wisest in his Kingdom and honoured him.

Discussion: Do people tease us sometimes about? How do we feel when we are teased? What can we do about it?

We may feel bad when someone teases us. It's OK to talk about it. Our Body is the work of nature / God. We did not make our body. A person who is teasing us about our body is actually, making fun of God / nature. Since we did not make our body, should we feel ashamed of it? Should we feel proud of it?

Refer to other story ideas in the Annexure 4:1.

Story: A child had gone to school. In school, some of his classmates teased him about his nose. So he was feeling very sad. When the class was over and they were waiting to go home, his best

friend came and asked him why he was so quiet. The child said that he was upset

because those boys (pointing to one direction) were teasing him about his nose. His friend said 'Forget it, ignore them'. Then his bus came and he said bye. The child said 'Bye' too but was still feeling sad. After going home, he saw some of his friends outside playing ball. He said 'I

think I will also go out and play'. He played well. All his friends were very thrilled that their team had won the game! After the game, he found that he was feeling fine! He was not feeling upset about the teasing and sat down happily to do his homework.

Material Required

Marker pen, Blu Tac / Board pins /
Double sided sticking tape / Cello tape
Marker pen, Chalk, Duster,
Blackboard

Tips for Trainers

- Encourage children to speak up and participate by saying "Thank you for bringing that out/ pointing that out. Let us have more response"
- Be aware of your facial expression and body language. Children should not feel intimidated or rejected. Welcome each response, expected, unexpected or inappropriate.
- When answers are inappropriate, these should be discussed such that children realize why they are inappropriate.
- Incorporate hand gestures and voice modulation to capture the interest of the students.
- It would be advisable to keep your language simple and also to intersperse some words from the local language during your session as it will help students feel comfortable and understand concepts better.
- Refer to other story ideas in the Annexure 4:1.

Core Message 2: The way people talk and act tells us about the character and behavior of those people.

Role play: You are on a busy street. The first person is in a hurry and is walking his way through the crowd by saying politely "excuse me please." Please give me some place". The second person is also in a hurry but to make space, he/she pushes people apart and says "get out of my way!" "Move!"

When you saw both these people, what did you think about the behaviour of both these people?

Did the words they used tell us anything about the behaviour of these people? What are the ways of dealing with people who tease or taunt you?

Tips for Trainers

- First ask the question to a single child and then put it forth to the other children. This helps giving every child an opportunity to answer as well as provides opportunities to clear doubts if necessary.
- If any child gives a different answer from the expected response ask the child to state the reason and use such incidents as points for discussion.

Making Connections

Once children understand that what a person says and does tells us about the nature and personality of that person, they will be better able to deal with people who taunt or bully them.

We can focus on our abilities and behavior as these are more important than our looks.

Core message 3: I can respect people for their skills, intelligences and behavior and show my respect in the way I behave with them.

What Do We Mean by Respect?

Children may not ask “What is respect?”, but that doesn’t mean they know what it means.

What is respect is a big concept to grasp. So try this definition of respect for kids, written with examples of respect for others and respect for self that children can understand.

A definition of respect includes:

- 1) How you feel about someone- Having respect for someone means you think positively about who that person is or how he/she acts. You can have respect for others, and you can have respect for yourself.
- 2) How you treat him/her – Having respect for someone means you act in a way that shows you care about their feelings and well-being.

Examples of what ‘respect’ is:

- You are quiet in a library to show that you care about (respect) others’ need to read without interruption.
- You don’t call people names because you care about (respect) their feelings.
- You don’t hit or otherwise hurt people because you care about (respect) their well-being.
- You dress, speak, and act in a way that shows you care about what you know is acceptable and safe, because you care about (respect) yourself and your well-being.
- You don’t interfere with other people’s right to look, think, or act differently than you because you care about (respect) their intelligence and opinions.

So what is respect?

Respect is thinking and acting in a positive way about yourself or others.

Respect is thinking and acting in a way that shows others you care about their feelings and their well-being.

Core Message 4: As a bystander I can help stop taunting/ bullying

Ask children: What can you do if you find others teasing or taunting your friends?

Do a **Role play** of supporting a friend who is being taunted.

Discussion: Discuss how one can go up and intervene/ stop taunting/ bullying? This is expected as we are Social beings and tend to support each other. There is strength in numbers. Talk to children about being assertive (stand up for one's own rights/other's rights without violating the rights of others) rather than being passive (Not standing for one's or others right for the sake of maintaining harmony) or aggressive (standing for one's or others' rights but in process violating the rights of the other person).

Some alternatives to aggressive confrontation might be to say something like "Not cool"/ "Don't be a bully"/"leave him/her alone" or to stand silently with the target as a show of support. Another option would be to support the mistreated children after the incident, perhaps helping that person report what happened.

Key Message to Communicate

- Children can support other children when they are teased. However, they need to understand the different between supporting/helping and confronting the person teasing/taunting. Trainers need to rationalize with children that even if they feel retaliation ("getting back at the person") is justified they should not respond violently or use abusive language. If we respond to violence with violence, it just continues a vicious cycle of negative behavior. Second, sometimes aggressively confronting a child/adult who is bullying can be embarrassing for the person being mistreated, and it may even make things worse for that person in the long run. Thirdly it might mean that the safety of the child who is confronting is at stake; which is not advisable.
- Alternatives to aggressive confrontation might be to say something like "Not cool"/ "Don't be a bully"/"leave him/her alone" or to stand silently with the target as a show of support. Another option would be to support the mistreated child after the incident, perhaps helping that person report

Concluding the session

Fun activity: Draw a flower; in the center, write your name. Draw petals around it. In each petal, write the name of a person who helps or supports you. Try to complete all the petals.

Or

Fun with Yoga! Ask students to adopt different posture – like the cat pose, the rabbit pose, the dog pose, the cobra pose, the tiger pose, the boat pose, the coconut tree pose, the ball pose.

Summarize and review the key messages:

What did you learn today? Ask students to share.

Reiterate:

Core message 1: My skills are more important than my looks.

Core Message 2: the words people use and their acts (behavior) tells us about the character and behavior of those people.

Core message 3: I can respect people for their skills, intelligences and behavior and show my respect in the way I behave with them.

Core Message 4 : As a bystander I can help stop taunting/ bullying

I came here to help you learn about your -self, your body and safety. I will come again and we will learn some more things.