

ARE YOU READY TO BE AN ALLY?

Here are some thoughts to guide you.

*Everyone knows that we all need to do our part to put an end to bullying, but it's not always so easy to **know** when and **how** to get involved.*

What Are Your Goals?

Be aware of your objective in getting involved. Keep three goals in mind:

- De-escalate the situation: Get it to stop or cool off.
- Support the target.
- Keep yourself and others safe from harm.

Are You Prepared?

Hopefully your involvement will have positive results, but it could lead to retaliation or an angry response. Consider the following before intervening:

- Are you prepared to stand up for what you believe is right and hold your ground?
- Are there others who will support your actions?
- Do you know what to do if you become a target?
- Are you capable of handling fallout, such as loss of friendship or hurtful comments?

What Can You Do?

Once you decide to get involved, there are many things you can do:

- Confront the situation: Put an immediate stop to the bullying by: making a strong statement ("That's not cool!"); challenging intentions ("It's not a joke, it's cruel."); expressing how it feels ("That really hurts."); or pointing out consequences ("I'm going to report this.").
- Help the target: Show support by getting the target to a safe space, asking if they're okay, offering solutions, going with them to get help or helping them to file a report.
- Find other allies: Enlist others to take action with you. There is strength in numbers—three or more people saying "Stop!" or standing up in other appropriate, nonviolent ways is more powerful than one, and might cause a chain reaction of support. And just think how great the target will feel when a whole group stands up.
- Know when to report: Tell an adult if the target is being threatened or is in physical danger; if the cyberbullying is going viral; or if students can't handle the situation alone. Remember that reporting is not "tattling" and that you can report anonymously if needed.
- Interrupt the cycle: Stop cruelty in its tracks by refusing to forward/laugh at/"like" hurtful messages, to take revenge, or to respond to bullying with more bullying. Be proactive by getting to know people who are different from you, starting a club or program on bullying/bias and working toward a community that is inviting for everyone.