Centering Youth Voices: Addressing Identity-Based Bullying
Video Discussion Guide for Educators

Link to Centering Youth Voices Full Video

Overview of Video/Video Synopsis

Through their powerful voices, young people share their experiences with identity-based bullying and the impact it has on them and their school community. These youth provide educators and schools with clear steps to address bias by encouraging authentic conversations about identity and bias, getting to the root causes, and implementing policies and practices to improve school culture. By listening with empathy and hearing their lived experiences, educators can use the youth's ideas for change to make a positive impact on their own schools.

Learning Concepts

+ Increase understanding of bullying behaviors being rooted in biases that disproportionately impact youth with historically marginalized identities.
+ Understand young people's expectations of educators in both preventing bullying and proactively creating environments where bias is not able to flourish.
+ Inspire and empower adults to act as allies in both individual and systemic ways.

Facilitation Guidelines For Discussion

When you are leading discussions about the video, there may be discomfort or pushback on certain topics and conversations could get heated and could trigger people in different ways. It is always a good idea to have some general ground rules to set the tone. Some ideas include encouraging people to listen actively, be open to different opinions and ideas, avoid monopolizing the discussion and keep the conversation confidential ("stories stay, lessons leave").

Since talking about issues of identity, diversity and bias can be difficult, allow time for trust to build and conversations to develop. Recognize there is a history of mistrust between certain groups of people and that this mistrust may influence the discussion. It is also important to establish an environment that allows for mistakes. As a society many people have been conditioned into biased and stereotypical thinking and therefore, individuals may not be aware that certain attitudes are hurtful to others. Acknowledge that biased thinking may surface from time to time in others and ourselves and facilitators can model non-defensive responses when issues arise. If divisive or hurtful comments occur, consider facilitation techniques like asking the speaker "What do you mean when you use that term?" or ask the other participants "What's another point of view?"

Discussion Questions

Pre-Video:

+ What does identity mean to you? What identities do you hold?
+ What is identity-based bullying? What is bias?
+ Thinking back to your school days, what do you remember about bias bullying incidents?
    ○ Did you tell anyone about it? Why or why not?
    ○ Did anyone help or hurt the situation? How so?
    ○ What did your teacher do?
    ○ What did the school do?
    ○ What was or would have been most helpful?
+ As educators, what do you do when you see identity-based bullying among students take place? Between staff and students?
+ What do you think students need when identity-based bullying takes place (short and long-term)?

Post Video:
+ What thoughts and feelings came up for you as you watched the video?
+ What messages did you hear from the young people in this video? What do they want educators and schools to do to address identity-based bullying that is happening to them and others around them?
+ Cooper's gender expression does not fit our society's binary stereotypes. What has made his journey difficult? What has made his journey successful?
+ Lyo was switched out of a math class because xe was being bullied by a group of girls. In fact, xe was moved out of the only advanced math class. Why is that problematic? What should have been done instead?
+ Chloe shared how her teacher's joke about her ethnicity impacted and harmed her. Sometimes when a comment is characterized as a "joke," that person making the joke thinks their intent (i.e., humor) should matter. In a situation like this, how can the harmful impact on Chloe be prioritized?
+ Julia talks about the effective way her teacher responded to an inappropriate comment about slavery. What did the teacher do that made it an effective response?
+ Ve'ondre talks about the importance of administration taking care of targeted students through education. What are some ways educators can respond to biased comments and behaviors that foster learning instead of punishment?
+ Chloe and Julia talk about the need for schools to look at the larger systems in place that allow for identity-based bullying to occur. What can schools do to create school environments where all students feel safe, included and treated equitably?
+ In what ways did their teachers and schools support the young people? In what ways did their teachers and schools not support them?
+ Which of the youths' social identity groups were targets of bullying? What are some other marginalized identities that are often targeted in general or at your school?
+ What did these youth say are the root causes for identity-based bullying?
+ What are your thoughts about how your school can address these root causes?
+ What was most impactful or memorable from the video? What was your biggest takeaway?

Further Exploration
Delve deeper into some of the ideas presented in the video by exploring these topics.

Identity-Based Bullying
Throughout the video, as young people talk about their experiences in school, they share examples of identity-based bullying. Identity-based bullying "refers to any form of bullying related to the characteristics considered unique to a person's identity, such as their race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or physical appearance." Because identity-based bullying targets who the student is—*a core part of their identity and who they are*—it is especially harmful. Identity-based bullying impacts not only the targeted student but others around them who identify in the same way and who fear that they may be the next target. If the bias and bullying are not addressed, that sends a message to others and the school community that targeting someone based on their identity is acceptable. That lack of response can open the door to continued bias, bullying and identity-based bullying. Reflect on the identity-based bullying that the students discuss, how it shows up, how it makes the students feel and possible solutions and actions that can be taken.

Intersectionality
As you discuss the video, it is important to understand the concept of intersectionality. Originally coined by civil rights activist, Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality is "the examination of overlapping and connected social systems that compound oppression for individuals who belong to multiple marginalized social groups based on their race, gender, class, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc." Intersectionality provides a way to look at the overlap and intersections of people's social group identities and addresses the related and intersecting systems of bias, discrimination and oppression. When an individual's identity includes several marginalized identity groups, this makes their experience of bias and oppression unique and compounded in a variety of ways. For example, for a Black queer woman, examining her oppression as a woman is not sufficient to truly understand her experiences in the world. All of her intersecting identities, with their accompanying harm, must be considered. In order to provide support, allyship and ultimately counter the bias and oppression, we need to have an intersectional lens. As you watch the video, consider the intersecting identities of the young people and reflect on their experiences.

How Bias Escalates
Bias, discrimination and oppression in our society are prevalent, frequent and have a long history. ADL's [Pyramid of Hate](#) illustrates how bias escalates and how biased attitudes and behavior grow in complexity from bottom to top. Like a pyramid, the upper levels are supported by the lower levels; unlike a pyramid, the levels are not built consecutively or to demonstrate a ranking of each level. Bias at each level reflects a system of oppression that negatively impacts individuals, institutions and society. Unchecked bias can become "normalized" and contribute to a pattern of accepting discrimination, violence and injustice in society.

Consider the biased attitudes and actions the students shared from their lived experiences.
+ Were those attitudes and actions accepted or "normalized?" If they were, could this lead to other levels of bias and discrimination?
+ What do you think would happen if those biased attitudes and behaviors were challenged or confronted? When we interrupt the escalation of bias, we make it more difficult for bias, discrimination and hate to continue and grow.

Welcoming Schools
Welcoming Schools teacher-friendly lesson plans and booklists are designed to help educators create inclusive classrooms and schools using an anti-racist, intersectional lens. Most bullying is based on biases, stereotypes and prejudice.These books and lessons help you lead your students in real conversations about the kinds of bullying they really see and hear at school, learning how they can be upstanders to help prevent bullying.
+ [Lessons for Preventing Bias-Based Bullying](#)
+ Booklists for Preventing Bias-Based Bullying- [Elementary](#), [Secondary](#)
+ [Professional Development for Educators](#)

ADL Education
ADL Education provides anti-bias education through professional learning, educational programs and resources to build and sustain equitable and inclusive environments.
+ [Lesson Plans](#)
+ [Books Matter™ Children's & Young Adult Literature](#)
+ [Professional Learning for Educators](#)

Data
+ [2021 National School Climate Survey](#) (GLSEN)
+ [2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health](#) (The Trevor Projects)
+ [Fast Facts on Bullying](#)(National Center for Education Statistics)
+ [Summary of Our Cyberbullying Research (2007-2021)](#) (Cyberbullying Research Center)