



I Am an Upstander
Upstander Toolkit
Lesson Plan

This lesson utilizes the Wassmuth Center’s Upstander Toolkit to encourage action rather than the silence or indifference of a bystander.

- I. Content:** I want my students to
- identify the differences between a bystander and an upstander.
 - explore the concepts of A.C.T. (ASK, CHOOSE, TEACH) using the materials included in the Wassmuth Center’s Upstander Toolkit.
 - encourage and inspire positive skills and responses as an upstander.
 - reflect on the meaning of the quotations in the Idaho Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial.
 - understand the mission of the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights *to promote respect for human dignity and diversity through education and to foster individual responsibility to work for justice and peace.*
- II. Prerequisites:** No prerequisites required.
- III. Rationale:** Read the following excerpt from “I Swear Never to Be Silent Again During Injustice” by Dan Prinzing, Executive Director of the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights, published in the *Idaho Press* on June 11, 2020.
https://www.idahopress.com/opinion/guest_opinions/guest-opinion-i-swear-never-again-to-be-silent-during-injustice/article_1009b091-cc75-58e1-b1e8-1c315c7e51e1.html.

In his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, Elie Wiesel stated, “I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation.”

A Romanian-born Jew, Elie was 15 years old when he and his family were deported to Auschwitz. His family was murdered, and he suffered under those whom Anne Frank described in her diary as “the cruelest monsters ever to stalk the earth.” But the “monsters” did not work alone.

“Some Were Neighbors,” the national exhibit produced by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, points out that in countrysides and city squares, in stores and schools, in homes and workplaces, the Nazis found countless willing helpers who

collaborated or were complicit in their crimes. Many supported the suffering and humiliation of others just by being silent.

George Floyd was murdered in Minneapolis – by one man with his knee on his neck, three who stood by and watched, and the scores of complicit throughout the country who have failed to A.C.T.

A.C.T. is an acronym the Wassmuth Center for Human Rights uses in the “Be an Upstander” program.

It is a call to action.

- IV. Instructional Objectives:** The students will
- A. define the vocabulary terms.
 - B. construct the personal A.C.T. tri-fold pocket student brochure.
 - C. discuss the meaning of A.C.T.
 - D. view the video "Be an Upstander."
 - E. write or role-play responses to scenarios using the A.C.T. model.
 - F. display the A.C.T. poster.
 - G. receive the A.C.T. notebook rulers.
 - H. Optional: Take the “I Am an Upstander” pledge using A.C.T. to interrupt the **Spiral of Injustice**.

V. Materials and Equipment:

The Upstander Toolkit includes the following:

Be an Upstander poster

Internet access to view “Be an Upstander” video

at <https://wassmuthcenter.org/human-rights-education/human-rights-education-resources/educator-resources/be-an-upstander/> and <https://youtu.be/wyV6OFm2KxQ>

30 copies of the personal A.C.T. tri-fold student pocket brochure

I Am an Upstander lesson plan

Handout 1 *Bystander to Upstander*

Handout 2 *How to Assemble the A.C.T. Upstander Brochure*

Handout 3 *A.C.T. Scenarios*

Handout 4 *A.C.T. Quotes*

Optional: Handout 5 *I Am an Upstander Pledge Form*

A.C.T. notebook rulers

scissors for student use

VI. Instructional Procedures:

- A. Optional: pre-lesson journaling or opening discussion questions

Prompts include:

Think of a time when you observed a person being treated unfairly.

Describe what it felt like to witness the injustice.

How would you want others to react if you were being targeted or excluded?

- B. Discuss by brainstorming the definitions of the following terms:

Bystander is an onlooker, a chance spectator, a person who is present but not involved. A bystander watches silently or finds a reason to walk away. Being a bystander supports the bullying behavior and implies agreement.

Courage is the quality of mind or spirit that enables one to face a difficulty or dilemma. It is being brave in the face of intimidation, harm, and fear. One root of “courage” is from the French word “corage” – *to speak and act from the heart*.

Dilemma is an undesirable or difficult situation requiring a choice to respond.

Empathy is the ability to identify with or understand another’s situation or feelings, compassion. Empathy is employed to support or connect with others. It is putting oneself in someone else’s shoes.

Upstander is a defender, advocate, and supporter of human rights and human dignity; an upstander acts when witnessing inequality, injustice, and oppression. Upstanders intervene and serve as examples for others.

- C. Discuss the context for the lesson guided by information provided in Handout 1 *Bystander to Upstander*.

Instructor: Ask yourself, how am I preparing my students to speak up? How can I encourage and inspire students to develop the courage and skills to speak out against injustice?

Assign Handout 1 for student reading. Consider the following for class discussion:

Speculate on the percentage of students who may experience bullying. (21%)

What are types of bullying? (physical, verbal, relational or personal property damage)

Where does bullying happen?

How often is a bystander present? (80% of the time)

Do you think anyone could be a bully?

Becoming an upstander may involve risk or courage. Why? (retaliation)

Can bullying be stopped? (In 57% of the cases, bullying stops within ten seconds when an upstander intervenes.)

What can happen to a victim if we remain bystanders? (increased depression, anxiety, aggression and declined academic achievement)

How does bullying impact the victim, the aggressor, the bystander and ultimately the school/community environment? (See Handout 1 for answers.)

What might be some short-term or long-term consequences of not being an upstander? (See Handout 1 for answer.)

Conclude with the following statement: Being a bystander is no longer an option. Ask, “Will you be an upstander?”

- D. View the video “Be an Upstander.”
Include as discussion after viewing:
Identify the upstanders and their actions in the video.

- E. Guide the students in the construction of the A.C.T. Upstander tri-fold pocket student brochure. See Handout 2 *How to Assemble the A.C.T. Upstander Brochure*.
- F. Using the folded student brochure, discuss the elements of the Wassmuth Center's A.C.T. to interrupt injustice. Create a chart and list student ideas. The following are suggestions for introducing the meaning and purpose of the acronym A.C.T. to promote the skills of becoming an upstander. During discussion, student responses may vary, but the goal is to empower students to have a say in the content and skills to personalize the learning and make it more relevant.

Upon opening the folded pocket brochure, sample discussion prompts include:

Review the meaning of upstander.

Discuss the Albert Einstein quote. See Handout 4 *A.C.T. Quotes* for background information on Einstein.

On the ASK portion of the pocket brochure, sample discussion prompts include:

Discuss the Gandhi quote. See Handout 4 *A.C.T. Quotes* for background information on Gandhi.

Do you recognize injustice?

What are some examples of injustices you have witnessed?

Note: Bullying is a deliberate act to control, demean or hurt someone. It involves the inequality of power and is often repeated.

When you hear someone tell a joke that belittles others or use a word that is demeaning, interrupt or challenge it by asking or responding:

Was that remark or action fair or just?

Is that how you would want to be treated?

What do you mean?

Are you intending to be hurtful?

Do you know the history of that word?

I don't like/use that word...

Some people think that's funny, but I don't.

I'm not okay with this.

On the CHOOSE portion of the pocket brochure, sample discussion prompts include:

Discuss the Malala Yousafzai quote. See Handout 4 *A.C.T. Quotes* for background information on Malala Yousafzai.

What actions can I take?

How will I act in this unjust situation?

Note: Think ahead and practice an action to interrupt or challenge an unjust situation. Recognize the power of one to influence a dilemma. This may take courage, but being a bystander is no longer an option.

Here are sample ways to interrupt or challenge unjust behavior:

Distract with a joke to stop the behavior.

De-escalate the situation by saying something kind or positive.

Support the victim publicly or later privately.

Say I'm sorry that happened to you. You don't deserve that.
*Speak up against unkind words and actions. (See **ASK** responses above.)*
Do not fight, confront, or retaliate with violence.
Disrupt by helping the target get away.
Report the incident to a trusted friend, teacher, parent, or other adult.
Do not reply to online taunts if cyberbullied. Do block negative users. Save the evidence.

On the **TEACH** portion of the pocket brochure, sample discussion prompts include:
Discuss the Henry David Thoreau quote. See Handout 4 A.C.T. Quotes for background information on Henry David Thoreau.

Note: Teach by being a positive example. Upstander is a verb, as well as a noun. Be a living example. Each one of us has the opportunity to make the world a place where every person is valued.

How can I promote change?
How can I keep these incidences from happening again?
Teach acceptance, respect, and compassion for others.
Be a thoughtful, civil learner and participant in your community by attending a rally, writing a letter, voting for leaders who support human dignity and equality.
Engage in community service.
Listen and learn by respecting the opinions of others.
Recognize other's strengths.
Make friends with diverse students.
Refuse to downplay slurs and hurtful speech. Don't use labels or presumptions.
Look inside yourself for prejudices and stereotypes.
Read about upstanders – current, literary, historical, personal.
Teach human rights and dignity.
Teach that diversity does not negate the common bonds of humanity.
Develop a sense of justice.
Engage in facts to counter bias and misinformation.
Read books, attend films, and travel to foster empathy for others.

- G. Instruct the students to carry the A.C.T. pocket brochure to share with a parent, sibling, or friend to encourage and inspire upstander actions.
- H. Distribute Handout 3 *A.C.T. Scenarios*. Students will write responses to the scenarios. As an extended option, have students role-play and videotape the upstander scenarios. Role-playing is a useful way for students to understand and learn what is expected and accepted. If needed, additional role-playing scenarios can be found at <https://www.bg.k12.ky.us/userfiles/1334/Classes/9776/BullyingStrategiesRolePlayCards.pdf> or page 80-81 at <http://teenoutreachprogram.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/CWO-EMP-F3-Bullying-Becoming-and-Upstander.pdf>.

- I. Optional: post-lesson suggested journal prompts:
Do you think a bystander can change the behavior of an aggressor? When you decide to step into a dilemma or unjust situation, discuss how you can respond as an upstander.
What did you learn that you did not know before this lesson? Did anything surprise you? If so, what? Discuss how you can make your school and community a better place by confronting injustice and celebrating differences.
Explain the meaning of the Albert Einstein quote. What does this quote imply about our responsibility to be an upstander? Use any or all the other quotes (Gandhi, Malala Yousafzai, Henry David Thoreau) for reflection to prompt student writing.
Who is an upstander you admire? Explain. What traits or actions did he or she employ? What traits or actions can you now use as an upstander?
- J. Display the Be an Upstander poster in the classroom or hallway to inspire and remind students to be upstanders.
- K. Optional: Encourage students to complete the *I Am an Upstander Pledge* by writing a personal commitment pledge concerning an injustice. See Handout 5 *I Am an Upstander Pledge Form*. This may also be conducted as a class activity.
- L. Distribute the notebook rulers to the students.

VII. Assessment/Evaluation:

- A. student participation in class discussions and interactions with each other
- B. student written responses to the *A.C.T. Scenarios* (Handout 3) and the optional pre- and post-journaling prompts
- C. construction of the A.C.T. upstander pocket brochure
- D. optional: student completion *I Am an Upstander Pledge* (Handout 5)
 Set a date to check student progress on their personal and school/community actions.

VIII. Content Standards:

Anchor Standards for Literacy: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7 – Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration

ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1 – Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2 – Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.3 – Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Anchor Standards for Writing: Range of Writing

ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.10 – Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Anchor Standards for Language: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.4 – Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

21st Century Skills

Learning and Innovation Skills

- a. Critical Thinking – Reason effectively, make judgments and decisions, solve problems
- b. Communicate clearly and collaborate with others
- c. Creativity and Innovation – Think creatively and work creatively with others

Life and Career Skills

- a. Initiative and Self Direction – Manage goals and time, work independently, be self-directed learners
- b. Social and Cross-Cultural Skills – Interact effectively with others
- c. Productivity and Accountability – Manage projects and produce results
- d. Responsibility – Be responsible to others

Information, Media and Technology Skills

- a. Information Literacy – Access and Evaluate Information

IX. Follow-up Activities:

- A. Obtain **Spiral of Injustice/Be an Upstander poster** series at <https://wassmuthcenter.org/human-rights-education/human-rights-education-resources/educator-resources/wassmuth-center-for-human-rights-education-poster-sets/>
- B. Read “Believe, Speak, Act.” Using a reader’s theatre format, this play increases comprehension of selected human rights upstanders featured on the Idaho Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial quote walls. Begin at page 52 of the Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial Lesson Packet at <https://wassmuthcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/IDAHO-ANNE-FRANK-MEMORIAL-LESSON-PACKET-2.pdf>.
- C. Optional readings:
 - “There Are No Bullies” from *Teaching Tolerance* Issue 45 at http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/TT45_web.pdf. Scroll to page 37.
 - “Bullying and the Bottom Line” from *Teaching Tolerance* Issue 57 at <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/fall-2017/bullying-and-the-bottom-line>.
 - “Preventing Bullying” at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/yv/bullying-factsheet508.pdf>

Handout 1

Bystander to Upstander

Why is being a bystander no longer an option?

Bullying can have significant mental, developmental, and social effects, making it a public health concern. When it comes to prevention, upstanders can take an active role to intervene. Bystanders are present 80 percent of the time when bullying occurs. A bystander, who chooses to be an upstander, has the potential to make a positive difference in the situation. When upstanders intervene, bullying stops within ten seconds 57 percent of the time.

Adapted from <https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/research-resources/bystanders-are-essential>

Bullying behavior can be physical (e.g., hitting), verbal (e.g., name calling either oral or written), relational (e.g., spreading rumors), or personal property damage.

Every year approximately 21 percent of U.S. middle and high school students are victims of bullying.

There are negative consequences for all involved.

Victim: Cumulative bullying victimization was significantly associated with increased levels of aggression and internalizing symptoms (e.g., depression, anxiety) and decreased levels of self-esteem and future optimism (i.e., sadness, loneliness, difficulty sleeping or eating, loss of interest in activities and/or academic achievement), increasing the likelihood to skip or drop out of school.

Aggressor: Cumulative bullying perpetration was significantly associated with increased levels of aggression and decreased levels of future optimism (i.e., engages in violent or other risky behavior even into adulthood, such as abuse of alcohol, drugs, vandalism, and other criminal behavior).

Bystanders who help the bullies: Cumulative negative bystander behavior (e.g., laughing at the perpetrator's behavior, joining in the bullying) was significantly associated with increased aggression and internalizing symptoms, and decreased academic achievement and future optimism (i.e., increased depression and anxiety).

Upstanders: Cumulative prosocial upstander behavior (e.g., directly confronting the perpetrator, alerting a teacher) was significantly associated with increased levels of depression and anxiety, as well as higher academic achievement, self-esteem, and future optimism. This might mean that while these upstanders felt good about helping, they also worried about being bullied next.

Adapted from <https://www.stopbullying.gov/blog/bullying-has-negative-consequences-all-involved> and from <https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/research-resources/consequences-of-bullying>.

Handout 2
How to Assemble the A.C.T. Upstander Brochure

Follow the directions below to assemble the A.C.T. Upstander student tri-fold pocket brochure.

1. Cut along the dotted lines.



2. Fold once along the center lengthwise with the three black **A.C.T.** blocks facing outward.



3. Next, fold the right third block with the Albert Einstein quote inward.
4. Fold the left third block so the **"I Am an Upstander"** appears on the front cover.



5. Refer to and use this guide when faced with unjust language and situations.

Handout 3
A.C.T. Scenarios

Brainstorm and write your ideas using the acronym A.C.T. to interrupt the behavior in each scenario provided. These prompts may be used for post-journaling or for role-playing in groups.

1. A group of boys has been intentionally bumping into another boy in the hallway, and the behavior is escalating to shoving and tripping. There are always others around, and some students laugh when it happens. Write a response utilizing A.C.T. **I am an upstander.**

2. A group of girls has targeted one particular girl who has recently come out as gay. They routinely spread rumors and gossip about her character. Many in the school have heard and/or talked about the rumors. Some students are attempting to make her feel like an outcast. Write a response utilizing A.C.T. **I am an upstander.**

3. Someone has been posting cruel comments about a student on Facebook, and the comments have been making the rounds of the school. The only basis for the comments is that the student looks very young for her age and wears thick glasses. A friend of yours just sent you a link to some of the comments with the message “LOL!” Write a response utilizing A.C.T. **I am an upstander.**

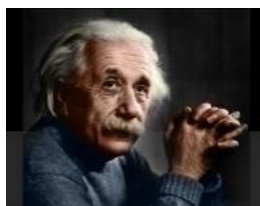
4. There is a student in school who seems shy and is perceived as somewhat different. Not only is he having difficulty making friends, but most students seem to ignore him. A few make cruel comments and snicker when he walks by. He walks to class alone, eats by himself in the cafeteria, and often sits alone on the school bus. Write a response utilizing A.C.T. **I am an upstander.**

Scenarios modified from “What Would You Do?” www.TheBullyProject.com

Handout 4
A.C.T. Quotes

The following are selected quotes from the Idaho Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial.

The world is a dangerous place to live in, not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it.



Albert Einstein 1879-1955

German-born physicist Albert Einstein is considered one of the most influential physicists of the 20th century. He gained worldwide fame for his general theory of relativity which describes the laws of gravity that govern the motion of large objects like planets. In 1921, he received the Nobel Prize for his explanation of the photoelectric effect. When the Nazis took power in Germany, Einstein, an outspoken pacifist, renounced his German citizenship and emigrated to the United States where he resided for the remainder of his life.

ASK

Make injustice visible.



Mahatma Gandhi 1869-1948

Mohandas Gandhi, also called Mahatma (the Great Soul), was the key leader in India's struggle for independence. Gandhi's strategy was nonviolent resistance. He encouraged Indians to refuse to cooperate with the British through acts of civil disobedience. The pressure was effective, and the British eventually granted India its independence on August 14, 1947. Gandhi's nonviolent methods have influenced civil rights leaders in the United States and throughout the world.

CHOOSE

When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful.



Malala Yousafzai 1997-

Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani education advocate, defied the Taliban at a young age, demanding that girls be allowed an education. A death threat was issued against her, and she was shot in the head on her way home from school on October 9, 2012. She survived and has continued to speak out for human rights issues worldwide. In 2014, Malala was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, making her the youngest-ever Nobel Prize Laureate.

TEACH

It is never too late to give up our prejudices.



Henry David Thoreau 1817-1862

Henry David Thoreau, revered as one of American's most notable writers, is best-known for his book *Walden* and his essay "Resistance to Civil Government," an argument for disobedience to unjust government policies and laws. His philosophical essays have inspired leaders of protest movements around the world, including Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Optional activities:

Go to <https://annefrankmemorial.org/virtual-memorial-tour/> to **Virtual Tour** in order to take a virtual tour of the Idaho Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial.

Go to <https://annefrankmemorial.org/> and scroll to **Who Are They** in order to view all quotes featured in the Idaho Anne Frank Human Rights Memorial. Ask students to identify other inspiring upstander quotes on the Memorial walls.

Handout 5
I Am an Upstander Pledge Form

 <p>I am an Upstander when _____ _____ _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Name _____</p>	 <p>I am an Upstander when _____ _____ _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Name _____</p>
 <p>I am an Upstander when _____ _____ _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Name _____</p>	 <p>I am an Upstander when _____ _____ _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Name _____</p>
 <p>I am an Upstander when _____ _____ _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Name _____</p>	 <p>I am an Upstander when _____ _____ _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Name _____</p>