Bullying in After-School Programs: Short Activity

Time:
15+ minutes

Materials needed:
- Printed scenarios

Internal Talking Points:
- Bullying is typically characterized by a pattern of behavior that is repeated over a prolonged period of time and intended to deliberately hurt, make fun of, embarrass, or exclude others.
- There is usually an imbalance of power in bullying. This imbalance can be related to size or age, but it also can be created by popularity (social status), race, ethnicity, faith, gender, sexual orientation (real or perceived), or socioeconomic status.
- There are three main types of bullying:
  - Physical Bullying: This type of bullying involves hurting a person's body or possessions. It may include punching, pushing, hitting, spitting, tripping, or taking/breaking someone's things.
  - Verbal Bullying: This type of bullying involves saying or writing mean things. It may include teasing, name-calling, or taunting.
  - Social Bullying: This type of bullying involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. It may include leaving someone out on purpose, telling others not to be friends with someone, spreading rumors, or embarrassing someone.
- Bullying can happen partially or even exclusively online—with victims being targeted by email, text, or via social networks.
- Often, the severity of bullying will escalate over time, starting out as name-calling and progressing toward physical violence or even peer-to-peer sexual abuse.

Instructions:
1. Break staff into four groups
2. Give each group one of the bullying scenarios
3. Prompt each group to read their scenario and then identify possible responses or interventions they could utilize to stop the bullying behaviors
4. Once each group is done discussing, have them read the scenario to the larger group and summarize their responses/interventions
5. Once everyone has shared, facilitate a conversation with all staff:
   - What was your biggest takeaway from this activity?
   - During our after-school programming, what times or activities do you find to be the most difficult to supervise and catch bullying behaviors?
   - What layers of protection can we put into place to prevent bullying during our after-school programs?
   - When does intervening become challenging, and how can you overcome those challenges?
6. To conclude the activity, remind staff of your organization's zero-tolerance policy of bullying, and how they can report any of these behaviors

Scenarios:

Scenario 1
Kristi is new to the organization's after-school programming as she recently moved to the area. Each afternoon, the staff bring the kids out onto the playground to play. A tight-knit group of kids usually play a game of tag together. Multiple times, Kristi has tried to approach the group and ask if she can play. Each time, the kids roll their eyes, giggle, and walk away. This leaves Kristi alone on the playground with no one to play with.

Scenario 2
All of the middle schoolers ride a bus together to their local youth-serving organization's after-school programming. Mike, an 8th grader, and Tim, a 6th grader, ride the bus every day. Mike is significantly bigger than Tim, and is very popular among the program participants as he has been attending for many years now. Over the past month, Mike has always gone and intentionally sat behind Tim on the bus. During the bus ride, he has been seen repeatedly flicking Tim's ear and shoulder, tripping him as he exits the bus, and stealing his book bag.

Scenario 3
It is the end of after-school programming, and there are three kids left to be picked up by their parents—Ella, Samuel, and Ginny. The staff member gave each of the kids their cell phones. Ella and Samuel are sitting in one corner, while Ginny is in the other. Ella and Samuel begin snickering and laughing at their phones. When Ginny arrives home later that afternoon, she discovers that Ella and Samuel have made a fake social media profile in her name and posted hurtful comments about them. Other kids in the program have begun to comment and share them online.

Scenario 4
During after-school programming, all of the kids have dedicated time to complete their homework. Alex, a quieter student, is diligently working on his assignments and finishing his work for the day. Jake and Dan, who usually sit nearby, have been repeatedly engaging in hurtful behaviors towards Alex for several days. They always whisper to each other about Alex, tease him about his academic abilities, and call him "Airhead". They laugh together, and always intentionally speak loud enough so Alex can hear the jokes they make.