



IN-SCHOOL ACTIVITY KIT

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ABOUT BECAUSE OF YOU

Because of You is a movement that encourages teens to reflect on the power of their words and actions and consider how they are affecting others.

The term Bullying has come to reflect a specific situation that does not always connect to the general culture of meanness many teens experience daily. While only one-third of teens list bullying as a top concern today, twice as many say they regularly experience more specific behaviors like drama, teasing, and exclusion. Adults often talk about bullies, bystanders and victims, but the lines are not so clear. Every day, we all have the opportunity to make someone else's day better or worse.

By encouraging self-reflection and focusing on specific actions, our goal is to inspire this generation to create a more empathetic and inclusive culture around them.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Inspiring individuals to think about how their words and actions have an impact on others is an effective way to build empathy and address the culture of meanness in schools today. We're excited that you're interested in helping to spread the Because of You campaign and empower teens to think about the impact they are having on others.

The activities below will help you get started as you think about how to activate in your school and beyond. We encourage you to collaborate with your community—students, administration, faculty, student government, relevant clubs and various teams can help maximize your reach.

ACTIVITY 1: VIDEO SCREENING & DISCUSSION

Estimated Time: 30 minutes (5 minutes per video, 20 minutes for discussion)

The Because of You campaign videos encourage teens to reflect on the power of their words and actions and consider how they are affecting others.

To help your students realize how powerful their actions are and think deeply about how they can affect others, show the videos below to your students. After they watch, use the discussion questions below to spur a conversation about the impact we can have on others. Depending on the nature of your group, you can read the questions aloud one at a time or print out the [Video Discussion Worksheet](#) on page 11.

Video Screening YouTube Links

[Honest Yearbook](#)

[Because of You](#)

Sample Discussion Questions

1. How did you feel watching this film?
2. What were some thoughts that came to mind as you watched?
3. What is the message the video is trying to convey? Do you think they were successful or not? Please explain.
4. Do you identify with anyone in the video? How so?
5. What sorts of things do others do that are hurtful?
6. What sorts of things do others do that lift you up?
7. Did watching the video change how you think about certain relationships or people? If so, how?
8. Is there any way you are thinking differently because of watching this video? How so?
9. How would our class/school/community be different if people were kinder?
10. What could we all commit to doing regularly to make sure we are having a positive impact on others?

ACTIVITY 2: RECOGNIZING OTHERS' IMPACT

Estimated Time: 30 minutes (15 minutes for setup and videos, 15 minutes to write cards).

The Because of You campaign videos encourage teens to reflect on the power of their words and actions and consider how they are affecting others.

To help your students realize how powerful their actions are and think deeply about how they can affect others, show the videos below to your students and ask them to consider the following questions: Has anyone ever made you feel welcome? Helped you feel better about yourself? Or stepped in when you needed a friend?

Video Screening YouTube Links

[Honest Yearbook](#)
[Because of You](#)

Big or small, there are things that we can all do to have a positive impact on someone's day, year or life. And there is nothing better than feeling safe, welcome, supported and loved – so let's start recognizing when others make us feel this way! Sharing a card or note of appreciation is a great way to let someone know that they made a real impact on you.

This encourages teens to share a physical card to help students reflect on a time when one of their peers made a difference in their day or life and allows them to recognize and reinforce that person's impact.

Step 1

Ask students to reflect on a time when someone had a positive impact on their day, year or life:

1. Has anyone ever made you feel welcome in a situation where you felt alone or uncomfortable?
2. Has anyone ever stepped in when you were feeling excluded (from a lunch table, group chat, text thread, gathering of friends)?
3. Has anyone ever made you feel better about yourself (through encouragement, a compliment, listening or providing emotional support)?
4. Has anyone ever shown up unexpectedly to help de-escalate a situation, provide support or stand up for you?

Ask students to write down the people and situations where someone had a positive impact.

Step 2

Using cards that students bring in or make themselves, ask students to hand-write a note of appreciation to the person who made a real difference in their day or life. Make sure they recognize that person for the impact they've had by describing the situation and how it made them feel.

Example:

Dear Suki,

I just wanted to say thank you for being a good friend. I am not sure if you remember, but last year I was feeling a little lonely. I often felt left out- like I didn't really have a group of friends. But you always went out of your way to invite me out and make sure I was okay. I don't know if you realize how much it meant to me. Because of you, I didn't feel so alone. Thank you.

Have them give or mail the cards to their peers.

Step 3

Follow up discussion (approximately one week later).

Ask students to share stories about giving the cards. Ask them to consider:

- How did it feel to recognize someone for something positive?
- What were the reactions of their friends? How did it feel to be recognized for something positive?
- Why is recognizing others for their positive impact important?

ACTIVITY 3: BE THE CHANGE

Estimated Time: 25 minutes (10 minutes for worksheet, 15 minutes for activity)

We all engage in and experience hurtful behavior. Sometimes, because it's so persistent, we do not consider the impact that certain behaviors have on others. But if we think about the impact of our words and actions before we say or do things, we have the opportunity to make a difference. "If you can name it, you can tame it."

This activity is designed to reframe the idea of bullying and meanness by asking students to consider and discuss the actions they experience regularly and the impact they have on others.

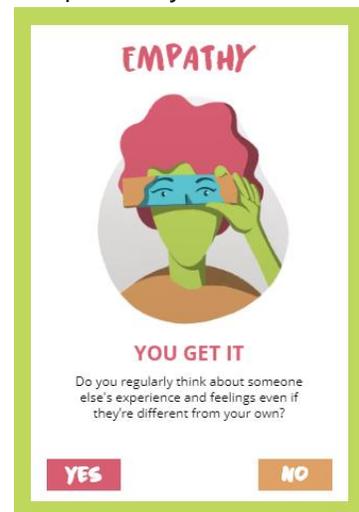
Step 1

Depending on the nature of your group, print the [Be the Change Worksheet](#) on page 13 or encourage students to use the interactive [Be the Change Cards](#) on BecauseOfYou.org.

Options for Step 2

Ask students to participate in a related activity. Some ideas include:

1. Interview classmates using the Be the Change Cards to determine which positive and negative actions are most common among the group. Chart the results and discuss how the group can work together to increase the positive and reduce the negative actions and behaviors.
2. Divide the honest cards and distribute to the group. Ask students to share their own stories that exemplify each of the actions or behaviors on their selected card. Consider different ways for students to share their stories which could focus on the actions or the impact illustrated on each card. Encourage students to submit writing, art, music, skits or a video project.
3. Create your own Be the Change Card. Ask students to identify other actions or behaviors that can be hurtful or helpful to others. Have them think through the action, impact and what they could tell their peers.



ACTIVITY 4: HONEST YEARBOOK

Estimated Time: 30 minutes (10 minutes for discussion and setup, 20 minutes to write letter).

What do you want others to say about you in your yearbook this year? As a group, we can all help each other be the people and community we want to be. This activity allows students to share how they would like to be perceived and treated by others—providing an opportunity to regularly check in and see how they are doing as a group.

Step 1

Discuss intentions and expectations for the year. Example discussion questions could include:

1. How do you want others to see you/describe you?
2. What makes you happy and feel supported?
3. What gets in the way of making you feel happy and supported?

Step 2

Ask students to share their intentions with the group by writing a letter to themselves or bringing in a picture (to display in the classroom or develop a book). Each letter or picture should include their name, what they want people to say about them at the end of the year, and actions that will help them achieve their goals/intentions. The [Honest Yearbook Worksheet](#) on page 15 has a template that can be used for a classroom display.

Step 3

Check in regularly. Ask students to share stories that exemplify their progress. Give them some time and opportunities to reflect on how they are showing up. Are they demonstrating their goals? Consider setting up a way for students to document or track their progress.

Step 4

At the end of the school year, create an activity where students can sign each other's "Honest Yearbook." Encourage the students to write notes and share stories that demonstrate the intended goals. And ask them to share the impact their friend's actions had.

ACTIVITY 5: BECAUSE OF YOU

Estimated Time: 20 minutes (5 minutes for worksheet, 10 minutes for discussion, 5 minutes for creating statements).

“Because you stood by me when nobody else did, I felt loved”

We will never forget the way someone made us feel because every action (good or bad) has a lasting impact. This activity is designed to demonstrate how we can change someone’s day, year and life by highlighting how other people’s actions make us feel.

Step 1

Depending on the nature of your group, ask students to raise their hands or place a checkmark on the [Because of You Worksheet](#) on page 16 if they have ever felt the following positive or negative feelings.

Positive

- Included and accepted in a group
- The confidence to be yourself
- Confident to speak up in a group
- Proud of your interests
- You could be yourself without anyone laughing or teasing
- Understood and recognized

Negative

- Stayed home from school because of something someone did or said
- Changed what you wanted to wear
- Avoided a person or group of people
- Decided not to participate in an activity
- Deleted or avoided a social media account
- Avoided speaking up or posting something online because you were afraid of being teased
- Was lonely or alone
- Humiliated
- Betrayed by friends

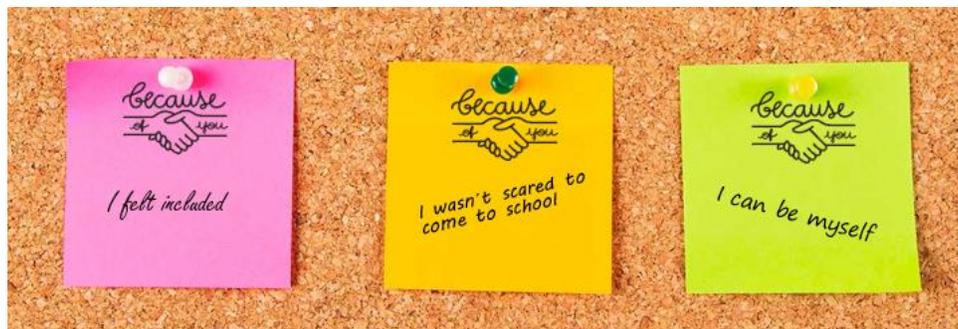
Step 2

Ask students to identify and share experiences that led to these feelings. Encourage them to explain what others did or said to make them feel this way.

- When you look back at this year, was there anyone who really impacted you? Someone who made a difference in your life?
- Was there ever something (even if small) that someone did that made a big difference for you?
- Was there anyone that changed the way you feel about something or even the way you feel about yourself?
- As you think about situations you went through, is there someone who doesn't know how you feel about them? What would you tell that person?
- Can you think of a situation or a person that has said or done something that really impacted you?
- And was there anything that you've said or done to someone that you think has impacted them? (positive or negative)
- Was there anything that, if you could go back in time, you'd have done differently?
- What did you learn from that experience?

Step 3

Create a wall or space that celebrates positive actions and the impact they have on others. Students can write or post examples that demonstrate kindness and the positive actions that have impacted them personally. For example: "Because you said hi to me on the first day of school, I felt included" – you can make these anonymous or have students sign their names. You could also encourage students to share these positive notes on people's lockers, or in other locations within your school.



APPENDIX

VIDEO DISCUSSION WORKSHEET

After watching the Because of You and Honest Yearbook videos, answer these questions.

1. How did you feel watching this film?
2. What were some thoughts that came to mind as you watched?
3. What is the message the video is trying to convey? Do you think they were successful or not? Please explain.
4. Do you identify with anyone in the video? How so?
5. What sorts of things do others do that are hurtful?

6. What sorts of things do others do that lift you up?

7. Did watching the video change how you think about certain relationships or people? If so, how?

8. Is there any way you are thinking differently because of watching this video? How so?

9. How would our class/school/community be different if people were kinder?

10. What could we all commit to doing regularly to make sure we are having a positive impact on others?

BE THE CHANGE WORKSHEET

Please answer the following questions honestly by circling yes or no.

ENCOURAGEMENT



GOOD VIBES

Do you make a point to share encouraging words with others, even if you think they don't need it?

YES

NO

EXCLUSION



PUSHING AWAY

Have you excluded someone from an activity, gathering, or conversation in a way that might have hurt their feelings?

YES

NO

EMPATHY



YOU GET IT

Do you regularly think about someone else's experience and feelings even if they're different from your own?

YES

NO

EXPOSING



"DID YOU SEE...?"

Have you ever shared someone's photos, text messages, or social media posts behind their back?

YES

NO

SUPPORT



REACHING OUT

Do you go out of your way to let people know you're available to listen, especially if they're going through a tough time or need extra support?

YES

NO

CALL OUT CULTURE



GROUP BASHING

Have you joined in on calling someone out publicly or turned against someone, even if you weren't sure it was justified?

YES

NO

COMMUNICATION



"LET'S TALK"

Do your friends and peers consider you open and non-judgmental?

YES

NO

SHAMING



SMALL DIGS

Have you ever insulted or picked on someone regularly, even if you weren't sure why?

YES

NO

LISTENING



"I HEAR YOU"

Do you regularly listen to others without interjecting your opinion?

YES

NO

TEASING



"I WAS JUST KIDDING"

Have you ever joked around with someone (either verbally or physically) and realized it might have hurt them in a way you didn't intend?

YES

NO

CONNECTION



BUILDING BRIDGES

Have you ever helped a person who maybe didn't have a lot of friends, feel supported and less alone?

YES

NO

ESCALATION



ADDING TO THE DRAMA

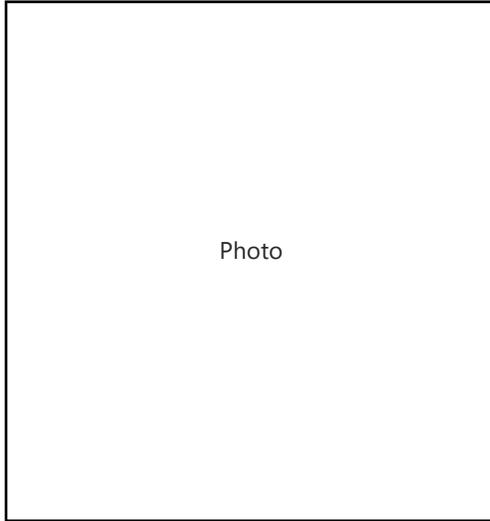
Have you contributed to an argument that became too intense or went further than intended?

YES

NO

HONEST YEARBOOK WORKSHEET

How would you like to be remembered at the end of the year?



Name:

At the end of the year, I would like to be known as:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

I will take the following actions to be perceived this way:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

BECAUSE OF YOU WORKSHEET

Place a check next to feelings or experiences you've had.

- Included and accepted in a group
- The confidence to be yourself
- Confident to speak up in a group
- Proud of your interests
- You could be yourself without anyone laughing or teasing
- Understood and recognized

- Stayed home from school because of something someone did or said
- Changed what you wanted to wear
- Avoided a person or group of people
- Decided not to participate in an activity
- Deleted or avoided a social media account
- Avoided speaking up or posting something online because you were afraid of being teased
- Was lonely or alone
- Humiliated
- Betrayed by friends

NOMINATE A STUDENT LEADER

Interested in continuing to address today's culture of meanness? Check out [Be Strong's](#) Student State Rep program. Be Strong, a partner of the Because of You campaign, is a national non-profit organization focused on preventing bullying using a comprehensive student-led approach.

As educators, you see first-hand how students interact day to day - you witness the good, the bad, and the ugly, like bullying - but you also see the outstanding students who radiate kindness and inclusion. If you know a student who is making a positive impact in your school, nominate them for Be Strong's Student State Rep program. Be Strong reps lead kindness and inclusion efforts on campus, reshaping social climates for the better.

Visit the link here to nominate a student: <https://nominate.bestrong.global>