

IndieFlix presents

The Upstanders At
Home Discussion Guide



*A documentary about resilience and the power
of connection to end bullying.*

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The Film & Movement

The Upstanders explores cyber-bullying, bullying among friends, families, co-workers and the brain science behind it all.

The film highlights new laws and programs already reducing bullying in schools and shows us how we can learn to make a difference together.

The Upstanders screens in schools, corporations, organizations and communities around the world. We believe in the power of post-screening conversations to create real change. We encourage a panel discussion and/or Q&A at your screening event. The Upstanders is appropriate for ages 10 and up.

theupstanders.com | indieflix.com | indieflixfoundation.org

What is an Upstander?

An Upstander is someone who takes action when they witness bullying. Even one person's support can make a big difference for someone who is being bullied. When youth who are bullied are defended and supported by their peers, they are less anxious and depressed than those who are not.

Here are some tips on how to be an Upstander:

- Question the bullying behavior. Simple things like changing the subject or questioning the behavior can shift the focus.
- Use humor to say something funny and redirect the conversation.
- There is strength in numbers too! Bystanders can intervene as a group to show there are several people who don't agree with the bullying.
- Walk with the person who is the target of bullying to help diffuse potential bullying interactions.
- Reach out privately to check in with the person who was bullied to let them know you do not agree with it and that you care. It makes a difference.

(stopbullying.gov)

After the Movie: Kicking Off The Conversation

Questions To Explore At Home

1. For the first time in history, 25 year-olds and under are the loneliest cohort of people. How is this possible when we are more connected than ever?
2. How do we help our kids make more meaningful connections?
3. What can a bystander do to become an upstander?
4. What was your big take-away from the film?
5. How is it that being more connect has left us feeling more disconnected?
6. Should government have a bigger role in bullying prevention?
7. Should social media platforms be held more accountable for cyberbullying?
8. The filmmakers wanted the audience to be able to take away some tips or ideas on how to help. Did any tips in the film stand out to you?
9. How can we help our kids feel good?
10. What are some building blocks for social emotional wellbeing?
11. How does loneliness affect our health?
12. What should I do if my kid is being bullied online? (see suggested answer by Common Sense Media on next page)
13. What should I teach my kid about safe online behavior? (see suggested answer by Common Sense Media on next page)

Suggested Answers & Conversation Starters

Q2: How do we help our kids make more meaningful connections?

- Disrupt our own patterns
 - In order to change habits and routine this needs to be systemic
 - Not just for a few minutes each day or each class
- Make real change & include the kids in the discussion
- Ways to disrupt existing patterns/activities
 - Try new ways of doing things
 - Survey your own process
 - Listen and make real sustainable changes
 - Fixing requires teamwork

Q9: How can we help our kids feel good?

- Our ability to connect with other people is based on our ability to connect with ourselves.
- Starts with connection with parents then teachers/coaches/neighbors/friends
- Model feeling good - what does that look like for you?

Q10: What are some building blocks for social emotional wellbeing?

- Sleep
- Nutrition
- Exercise
- Offline socialization
- Gratitude list (3 things you're grateful for each am/pm)
- Random Acts of Kindness (positive energy toward others) 1x per day
- Mindfulness

Suggested Answers & Conversation Starters

Q11: How does loneliness affect our health?

- Difficulty sleeping
- Less exercise
- Lower self esteem
- Bullying triggers fight-or-flight in the brain and nervous system which can lead to anxiety, isolation, addiction and living in survival mode

The Downward Spiral

Loneliness

- Raises our threat level to state of fight-or-flight
 - Shifts focus inward, survival mode
 - Leads to chronic stress
 - Erodes Self Esteem
 - False images of self, loss of touch with reality
 - Anxiety
 - Isolation
 - Depression
 - Lashing out, bullying, suicidal thoughts

Q12: What should I do if my kid is being bullied online?

Finding out that your kid has been cyberbullied is emotional for parents. You or your kid might want to retaliate, but it's best to help your kid defuse the situation, protect himself or herself, and make rational efforts to put a stop to the bullying. Here are the immediate steps we recommend for parents:

- Reassure your child that you love and support them.
- Encourage your child to take a break from their device.
- If you can identify the bully, consider talking with the parents.
- Consider contacting your kid's school. If bullying is happening online, it might be happening offline, too.
- Empower your kid with specific steps he or she can take.

Suggested Answers & Conversation Starters

Q13: What should I teach my kid about safe online behavior?

Communicate appropriately. Use the right language for your audience. You might write or speak to a teacher differently from a friend. And never use all caps!

Keep private things private. Don't share personal information, including passwords, your home address, inappropriate images, and gossip.

Respect others. Be courteous. Disagree politely.

Don't lie, steal, or cheat. Don't try to deceive others. Remember to give credit where credit is due. And, although it's easy to copy others' work, download things without permission, or use game cheat codes, don't do it.

Be an "upstander." If someone you know is being targeted by a bully, stand up for that person. You would want him or her to do the same for you.

Report misbehavior. The Internet is a giant community, and you can help it be a nice place.

Follow your family's rules. If your parent tells you to avoid certain websites or to stop texting after a certain time, listen. The more you act responsibly, the more privileges you'll get.

Think before you post, text, or share. Consider how you and others might feel after you've posted something. It's not always easy to take back what you've said online, and your online behavior can create a lasting footprint.

Quick Tips for When You Encounter Online Bully Behavior

Sign off of the computer. Ignore the attacks and walk away from the cyberbully.

Don't respond or retaliate. If you're angry or hurt, you might say things you'll regret later. Cyberbullies often want to get a reaction out of you, so don't let them know their plans have worked.

Block the bully. If you get mean messages through a social-networking site, take the person off your buddy or friends list. You also can delete messages from bullies without reading them.

Save and print out bullying messages. If the harassment continues, save the evidence. This could be important proof to show parents or teachers if the bullying doesn't stop.

Talk to a friend. When someone makes you feel bad, sometimes it can help to talk the situation over with a friend.

Tell a trusted adult. A trusted adult is someone you believe will listen and who has the skills, desire, and authority to help you. Telling an adult isn't tattling -- it's standing up for yourself. And, even if the bullying occurs online, your school probably has rules against it.

Resources

Learn more about the project & see additional resources
on our website:

TheUpstanders.com

IndieFlix.com

CreativeCopingToolkit.com

Additional online resources/references in this guide:

StopyBullying.gov

[Common Sense Media](http://CommonSenseMedia.org)

BystanderRevolution.org

StandForCourage.org

[ReThink](http://ReThink.org)

[The Big Quiet](http://TheBigQuiet.org)