



Looking out for others

Lots of people are not sure what to do when something unkind happens. This could be when someone says something unkind at school or online. Most people wait for someone else to do something. But everyone else is waiting too. So, nothing happens. It only takes one person to change that. That person could be you.

What is a bystander?

A bystander is someone who sees something unkind happen to someone else. You are not part of it. You are the person who notices. A bystander can choose to help or to do nothing. What you choose makes a big difference. You can be a bystander in person or online. This includes group chats and games.

What is an upstander?

An upstander is someone who chooses to help when they see something unkind. You do not have to argue with anyone. You should not do anything that makes you feel unsafe. There are many safe and positive ways to help, and they all count. Being an upstander is about showing kindness and empathy to help someone who is being bullied or harmed.



Myth and fact: What people think and what is really true

Most people want to help. It can be hard to know what to do. Here are some things some people think, and what is true.

Myth



Being an upstander means telling the person to stop.

Fact



You can help in many ways. Check in with the person who was hurt. Quietly tell a trusted grown-up. Choose kindness and empathy.

Myth



If I say something, I might be next.

Fact



Most upstander actions are quiet, and they should always be safe. Telling a trusted grown-up is a safe choice. Letting the person who was hurt know that you care is a safe choice.

Myth



One person cannot make a difference.

Fact



When one person speaks up or shows support, unkind behaviour can stop. One person matters a lot.

Myth



If no one else acts, it must not matter.

Fact



People stay quiet for lots of reasons. They may be unsure what to do, or they might be afraid of what will happen if they speak up.

Myth



Telling a teacher is dobbing.

Fact



Telling is getting help for someone who needs it. 'Dobbing' is telling on someone to get them in trouble. They are not the same thing.

Myth



If something unkind happens online, it is not my problem.

Fact



Online bystanders matter just as much as in-person. You can check in with them privately. You can tell a trusted grown-up. You can choose not to join in.

Next steps

You do not have to do something big and you should not do anything that feels unsafe. Even small actions can have a real impact.

You can be an upstander by:

- ◉ telling a trusted grown-up
- ◉ checking in with the person who was hurt
- ◉ not joining in
- ◉ including someone who is being left out
- ◉ choosing kindness and empathy.

Where to get more help

If you need further support, help is available:



Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 or kidshelpline.com.au. Free, confidential counselling for bullying and other harmful behaviours, school issues, online harm and wellbeing, available 24/7.

Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636 or beyondblue.org.au. Mental health support for stress, anxiety or overwhelm, available 24/7.

Lifeline: 13 11 14 or lifeline.org.au. Crisis support and counselling if things feel overwhelming, available 24/7.

Dolly's Dream Bullying Support Line: 13 36 55 (13 DOLLY) or dollysdream.org.au. Counselling and guidance for children and young people experiencing bullying and other harmful behaviour, available 24/7.

headspace/ehespace: 1800 650 890 or headspace.org.au. Mental health, wellbeing and early intervention support, available 9 am–1 am daily.

Connected resources

- ◉ What is empathy?

1800RESPECT: 1800 737 732 or 1800respect.org.au. Sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling line for anyone who has experienced, or is at risk of, family and domestic violence and/or sexual assault, available 24/7.

13YARN: 13 92 76 or 13yarn.org.au. Culturally safe 24/7 support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

QLife (LGBTIQA+ young people): 1800 184 527 or qlife.org.au. Free, anonymous peer support and referral service, available 3 pm–9 pm daily.

eSafety Commissioner: esafety.gov.au. Report cyberbullying, get advice and request content removal support.

Australian Human Rights Commission: humanrights.gov.au. Support for cases involving discriminatory harm. Reports can be made via their website or by emailing infoservice@humanrights.gov.au.

State, territory and non-government education sectors will reflect the expectations of the National Framework for Addressing Bullying in Australian schools in their policies and procedures by Term 1 2027. This includes making reasonable efforts to initiate a response to bullying and harmful behaviour within two school days, recognising that further time may be required to fully address the issue. By Term 1 2027, all schools will also publish or link to policies and procedures that align with the National Framework (or equivalent contemporary jurisdiction specific Frameworks) and their local policies and school context.