



Stand Up / Speak Up Assembly
Helping Bystanders Become Upstanders
Because bullying is not OK, and silence isn't either

The Need

Despite national media attention and increased efforts by legislators, policymakers, and educators, bullying and related forms of peer mistreatment continue to have a negative impact on schools. Bullying is getting younger, meaner, harder for adults to notice, and more acceptable in youth culture. It undermines attendance and student achievement, is harmful to young people's social and emotional development, and erodes staff morale.

Making school safer and improving school climate require a concerted effort by all stakeholders – students, staff, parents, and community. Engaging students is the most cost effective way to get these results, because students see, hear and know things adults don't, and can intervene in ways adults can't.

The Assembly

A Stand Up / Speak Up Assembly is a powerful, student-centered experience that enlists, unites, and empowers K-12 students to take a stand and speak up when they see bullying and violence among their peers. This high-energy event delivers a compelling and consistent message to all students that bullying is not OK and silence isn't either. It introduces them to youth-friendly language and skills they can use to safely and effectively defuse, de-escalate and stop bullying behavior. The Assembly can be easily incorporated into existing school bell schedules.

How it Works

The Stand Up / Speak Up Assembly package features up to 3 assemblies per day, delivered by highly skilled presenters. Proven, age-appropriate techniques – including music, video and audience participation – are used to engage students in a self-discovery process that explores:

- **What Is Mistreatment?** – Provides a common vocabulary that sensitizes students to the mean behavior that is too often ignored, accepted, or not even recognized as being mean.
- **Consequences and Costs of Mistreatment** – Shines a light on the effect of bullying on the Targets and the Aggressors, as well as the impact on the bystanders, the staff and the whole school.
- **Motivation to Act** – Increases empathy, as well as “enlightened self-interest,” and wakes up their courage to become upstanders, both on and off campus.
- **Upstander Actions** – Helps bystanders stand up and speak up with effective, youth-friendly communication and intervention skills – language and actions that all students can use safely and effectively with their friends and classmates. These tools help them interrupt mean behavior and help their peers make better choices, to provide support that prevents retaliation and escalation, or to get adult help when the situation warrants it.

Assemblies are 60 minute presentations, and include up to 125 students for Elementary students and up to 200 Middle and High students.

All assemblies require participation of classroom teachers and other supervising adults.

The Assembly package includes a Follow-up Guide with resources for **three class meetings** and **one all-school event**:

Meeting #1 reviews the Assembly and allows students to contribute ideas to the process of creating a school pledge.

Meeting #2 explores the costs of mistreatment on a more personal level, which deepens students' commitment to take action. It also includes the signing of their school pledge.

Meeting #3 provides students with further practice and coaching of their Upstander Actions,.

These meetings are designed to be either led by an adult (classroom teacher or guest facilitator like the school counselor), or co-led by adults and students (students are typically older, selected for their status and poise, and provided with a brief training to prepare them for their role).

Benefits Include:

- **Convenient:** Blends with a school meeting forum that already exists, and is easily incorporated into current school schedules.
- **Consistent Message:** Lets all students (and staff) know that bullying and other forms of hurtful behavior are not OK, and silence isn't either.
- **Common Campus Language:** Creates a common understanding and language for naming hurtful behavior, eliminating the excuse of 'But she laughed...' or 'I didn't know...'.
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- **Highly Visible:** The assembly says "This is a priority for us" and can be used to launch or rekindle a school-wide initiative or campaign.
- **Encourages Helpful Interventions:** Gives all students permission to speak up, and a vocabulary for doing so. Introduces skills so students can resolve many issues without adult involvement, which reduces the time administrators and teachers spend on discipline.
- **Supports a Whole-School Climate Approach:** Is a catalytic activity that can mobilize students and staff, and increase the school's commitment to making school climate and connectedness a priority and a cornerstone of the school's mission.

The Stand Up / Speak Up Assembly has been developed by Community Matters, creators of the nationally recognized, evidence-based, Safe School Ambassadors (SSA) program. The SSA program has been implemented in over 900 schools and has equipped over 60,000 students in 28 US states and 2 Canadian provinces to become peacemakers.

The Cost:

- First day: up to 3 Stand Up / Speak Up Assemblies - \$2500.
- Second and subsequent days: up to 3 Assemblies - \$2000.

Expenses for trainer travel are additional.

Maximizing the Impact:

An assembly is a powerful way to inspire, but its ability to sustain student action is limited. Therefore, a Stand Up / Speak Up Assembly will have greater impact when implemented as part of a systemic whole school climate approach, one that includes ongoing and complementary student-engagement strategies like the **Safe School Ambassadors (SSA) program**. SSA engages student leaders from the school's diverse cliques and groups, equips them with a more comprehensive set of communication and intervention skills, and provides them with ongoing support and training, which helps to ensure that socially influential Upstanders are modeling pro-social action to the entire student body throughout the year.

If a Stand Up / Speak Up Assembly is purchased during the same school year as your SSA Initial, Expansion or Expansion Combo program, deduct \$500 from the total cost. Deduct \$250 if purchased with an SSA Refresher.

For more information or to schedule a Stand Up / Speak Up Assembly, please contact us by phone or email outreach@community-matters.org