

Standing Strong: Nonviolent Resilience Training

Inspired by Civil Rights Nonviolent Resistance Principles

IMPORTANT NOTICE: This training is intended for addressing minor to moderate bullying situations. If you or someone you know is experiencing severe bullying that has led to withdrawal from activities, significant mood changes, or thoughts of self-harm, please seek help from a licensed mental health professional immediately.

Program Overview

This training program adapts the powerful nonviolent resistance strategies from the Civil Rights Movement's lunch counter sit-ins to help young people respond effectively to bullying. Through structured 45-minute sessions, participants will learn practical techniques to maintain dignity, protect themselves emotionally, and transform hostile situations through principled nonviolent responses.

Core Principles

- Inner strength comes from moral conviction and self-worth
- Responding to aggression without becoming aggressive
- Community support and solidarity are essential
- Strategic response is more effective than emotional reaction
- Personal dignity is non-negotiable

Session Structure

Introductory Session: The Power of Nonviolent Response (45 minutes)

- Welcome and community building (5 minutes)

- Understanding bullying dynamics and power imbalance (10 minutes)
- Introduction to Civil Rights nonviolent resistance history (10 minutes)
- Overview of core principles and training journey (10 minutes)
- Testimonial video from former bullying victims (5 minutes)
- Preview of upcoming sessions and practice commitment (5 minutes)

Detailed Breakout Sessions

Session 1: Finding Your Center (45 minutes)

- Centering exercises for emotional regulation (10 minutes)
- Understanding your personal dignity and worth (5 minutes)
- Body language mastery: The non-fear position (15 minutes)
 - Head positioning (slightly up vs. down)
 - Eye focus (above eye level, not at the bully)
 - Controlled breathing and relaxed shoulders
 - Natural arm position and hand techniques
 - Deliberate movement and walking pace
- Practice: "The centered response" role play (15 minutes)

Session 2: Strategic Disengagement (45 minutes)

- When and how to disengage from a bullying situation (10 minutes)
- The strength in walking away (strategic withdrawal vs. surrender) (10 minutes)
- Creating personal space and boundaries (10 minutes)
- Practice: "Exit with dignity" scenarios (15 minutes)

Session 3: Attention Management (45 minutes)

- The power of strategic silence (10 minutes)
- When and when not to engage verbally (10 minutes)
- The attention cycle: How bullying feeds on reactions (10 minutes)
- Practice: "The ghost technique" - acting as if the bully is invisible (15 minutes)
 - Maintaining non-fear body language while not engaging
 - Avoiding eye contact without appearing fearful
 - Positioning techniques to minimize engagement opportunities

Session 4: Building Your Support Community (45 minutes)

- Identifying allies and support networks (10 minutes)
- How to safely involve others in your response (10 minutes)
- Collective solutions to persistent bullying (10 minutes)
- Practice: Creating support response plans (15 minutes)

Session 5: Documenting and Reporting (45 minutes)

- Effective documentation methods (10 minutes)
- Understanding reporting channels and when to use them (10 minutes)
- Rights and responsibilities in institutional settings (10 minutes)
- Practice: Creating a personal response plan (15 minutes)

Session 6: Transformation and Growth (45 minutes)

- Converting experiences into personal growth (10 minutes)
- Helping others who face similar challenges (10 minutes)
- Long-term resilience strategies (10 minutes)
- Graduation ceremony and commitment statements (15 minutes)

Success Metrics

Individual Progress Metrics

- Pre/post assessment of confidence in handling bullying situations (1-10 scale)
- Weekly logging of bullying incidents and response effectiveness
- Self-reported anxiety levels before/during/after bullying encounters
- Number of successful applications of techniques in real situations

Program Effectiveness Metrics

- Reduction in reported bullying incidents (30-day follow-up)
- Increase in participant self-advocacy behaviors
- Improvement in school/activity attendance and participation
- Percentage of participants who report using at least two learned techniques
- Peer-nominated improvements in social climate

Training Methods

Interactive Elements

- Role-playing exercises with guided feedback
- Small group discussions and solution development
- Journaling and reflection activities
- Guided visualization for preparation and processing
- Video analysis of effective nonviolent responses

Materials Needed

- Participant workbooks with reflection pages

- Response technique cards
- Scenario cards for role play
- Digital resources for continued practice
- Community building activities for each session

Facilitator Guidelines

Creating a Safe Space

- Establish and maintain group agreements
- Address microaggressions within the training immediately
- Provide optional one-on-one check-ins for participants
- Create multiple ways to participate for different comfort levels
- Be prepared to provide additional resources when needed

Adapting for Different Ages

- For younger children (8-11): More movement-based activities, simplified concepts
- For adolescents (12-15): More peer-to-peer practice, social navigation focus
- For older teens (16-18): More autonomy in developing personal strategies, leadership development

Implementation Roadmap

Before Starting

- Conduct participant intake assessments
- Provide parent/guardian information session
- Brief relevant school/community personnel

- Prepare environment and materials

During Program

- Weekly facilitator reflection and adjustment
- Midpoint check-in with participants individually
- Ongoing documentation of progress and challenges

After Completion

- 30-day follow-up assessment
- 90-day refresher session
- Support group continuation option
- Advanced training for peer leaders

Adapting Civil Rights Sit-In Principles to Bullying Responses

Civil Rights Sit-In Principle	Bullying Response Application
Moral conviction and clarity of purpose	Understanding your inherent worth and right to dignity
Preparation and training before action	Practicing responses in safe environments before needed
Community support and solidarity	Building a network of allies and supporters
Nonviolent demeanor regardless of provocation	Maintaining composure and refusing to mirror aggression
Strategic rather than reactive approaches	Planning responses rather than acting from immediate emotion
Documentation of incidents	Recording patterns of bullying for appropriate reporting
Focus on system change, not individual blame	Addressing bullying culture rather than just individual bullies

Remember: The goal is not to "win" against a bully but to transform the situation through your response while protecting your wellbeing and dignity.