

## Supporting, Not Blaming

When Fones and a friend see Specs approaching, they throw a banana peel on the floor. Specs slips on it and goes flying. Specs looks embarrassed. Later, Keenly sees that Specs is upset and asks about it. When Specs shares the story, Keenly listens and helps Specs come up with ideas for dealing with it. The next day when the same thing happens, Specs responds assertively.

**Narrated Message** // *Teasing and bullying are two very different things. In our cultures we may tease each other sometimes as a way of acknowledging and accepting one another in our communities. But this kind of teasing is done with love. Bullying is very different. Sometimes we try to find a logical reason for bullying behaviour. Sometimes we may even wonder if the person being bullied is to blame. Bullying can happen to anyone for any reason. Let's remind our children that it's never their fault. Being proud of who we are and celebrating our differences will boost our children's self-confidence and have a lasting impact. Nobody deserves to be bullied—ever.*

### IDEAS

- Children who are being bullied may think that they are somehow at fault. Feeling blamed for being hurt makes the bad feelings worse. We can let children know that no one ever deserves to be bullied.
- Providing safe places for those who are bullied to get help is all-important.
- Coming to a better understanding of why some people bully others is important. Children who bully others target a person's difference, which they see as a weakness.
- Fear and shame can prevent those who are bullied from asking for help. Family members' roles can include providing support and helping children feel better about themselves. Understanding the emotional and/or physical harm that can come from being bullied is important.
- Feeling proud of our cultures and our differences is necessary for kids to feel better about themselves and heal from bullying. Finding ways to help children believe in our cultures and our differences is part of feeling better about themselves.
- Creating communities where bullying, racism and all forms of abuse and injustice are not allowed, and if it occurs, working together to deal with it in a positive way.

## QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

### Family Members

1. What are some of the messages in this film?
2. What are some of the reasons a child from our Aboriginal communities might think they are to blame when someone bullies them or is racist towards them?
3. How would you describe how bullying and racism make children feel?
4. Why do you think children might target children who appear to be weak? How might you prevent others from bullying or being racist?
5. How would you help and encourage healing if your child has been bullied or experienced racism? How might teachers and the school help you with this?
6. Can you think of some ways that you and the school could share the message that nobody deserves to be bullied or targeted by racism (or any form of social injustice)?
7. Do you have any suggestions or personal stories to share?

### School Staff and Community Leaders

1. Have you observed the impact of being bullied on some of your students? How would you describe this? How is this different or similar to when an Aboriginal student is bullied?
2. How might you improve the self-esteem of a bullied Aboriginal student in your classroom? Are there ways you could partner with Aboriginal family members in this effort?
3. Why do you think people that bully often prey on what they perceive to be others' weaknesses or vulnerabilities? As an educator, how might you help prevent this?
4. How does your school provide safe ways for students who have been bullied to get help and support? What additional ways to take action are needed to reach out to and support Aboriginal students?
5. Does your school clearly and consistently communicate the message that nobody deserves to be bullied? In what way? How do these ways of taking action specifically help to prevent racist bullying (or bullying based on other forms of social injustice)? How could the board help with this?
6. Are there any additional responses that might further support and meet the specific needs of Aboriginal children and family members?