**The Power Shuffle**

Note teachers need to review questions before the lesson; some questions may not be grade appropriate. Feel free to add your own bullying questions.

1. Get group into a circle and review the purpose and goals of the class meeting.

Say: **Today we are going to see how bullies have affected all of our lives?** Review each rule and what each rule means with your group

* **I will not bully others**
* **I will help others that are being bullied**
* **I will include students that are left out**
* **I will tell an adult when I know someone is being bullied**

Say: **Now we are going to power shuffle.**

**Objective:** To bring student awareness to the effects of prejudice, ridicule, teasing, and other hurtful behaviors.

Materials: Divide the room in half by using one row of tiles on the floor. You can put down a strip of painters tape, but it is not necessary.

Line up all the students on one side of the room along one side of the row of tiles across the floor, facing the line.

Introduce the activity: **“Sometimes when someone hurts another person he/she is just being mean or maybe he/she is being careless or maybe they feel pressure from their friends to join in when other people are teasing or excluding someone. Other times, people hurt other people just because of who they are—just because of the color of their skin, or their ethnicity, socio-economic class, or their religious beliefs. These ways of being mean can even be supported or encouraged by our society –where privilege and laws give some groups more power than other groups. For example, you may know that there is almost an even number of men and women in the U.S. Does anybody know how many women are in Congress, making our laws? So even though 50% of our society is women, only 11% are making our laws. How might that influence those laws that do get made? And similarly people of color are underrepresented in Congress. How might that influence our laws? That’s an example of how discrimination—treating some groups of people unfairly, not just individuals—is part of our society. In this activity we’re going to look at ways we hurt each other and how differences can sometimes be used to divide us.”**

Explain how to do the activity: **“It’s best to do the activity we’re about to do in complete silence. You might have some strong feelings during this activity—sadness, anger. So we need to be very respectful and caring to one another. No laughing or talking, so we can all feel safe. Raise your hand if you can agree to the ‘no-talking, no-whispering, no-laughing rule.”** If someone forgets, please gently remind him or her. Remember, all our feelings are important.

Say, **“I’m going to call out a group and if you belong to that group, please cross the line and turn around to face the students on the other side. If you do not feel comfortable crossing the line, even though you are part of that group, that’s okay. You can stay right where you are.”** When you tell the group that crossed the line to return, they will return to their original places on the other side of the line, so that the entire group is standing together once more.

Important Facilitation Note: After each of the “cross the line” categories, you will 1) pause until the students who have crossed the line have turned to face the other students; 2) then you will say: **“Now notice how it feels to cross the line and notice how it feels to watch other people cross the line (pause). Look who is with you (pause). Look who is not with you (pause)”** and 3) ask everyone to come back together.

* “Now, cross the line silently if you’ve ever been teased or called a bad name or made fun of.”
* “Cross the line if you’ve ever been judged, put down, or teased about your accent or your voice, or told that you couldn’t sing.”
* “Cross the line if you, a family member or any friend of yours has a disability that you can or cannot see.”
* “Cross the line if you’ve ever seen someone else being teased or called a bad name or made fun of for any reason at all.”
* “Cross the line if you’ve ever been called a name or put down or made fun of or whistled at or harassed or told you couldn’t do something you wanted to just because you’re a girl.”
* “Cross the line if you’re a boy and you’ve ever been told you shouldn’t cry, show your emotions, or be afraid or told you couldn’t do something just because you are a boy.”
* “Cross the line if you’ve ever been picked last in games or sports or felt left out or excluded from an activity altogether.”
* “Cross the line if you or someone you care about has ever been judged, put down, teased, or excluded or discriminated against because of your religious background.”
* “Cross the line if you or someone you care about has ever been judged, put down, teased, excluded, or discriminated against because of the color of your skin.”
* “Cross the line if you’ve ever been told by an adult that you’re too young to understand or been called a name by an adult or had your dress or appearance criticized by an adult.”
* “Cross the line if you’ve ever felt alone, unwelcome, or afraid.”
* “Cross the line if you or someone you care about has ever been teased or made fun of for wearing glasses, braces, a hearing aid, or for the clothes you wear, your height, your complexion, or for the size or shape of your body.”
* “Cross the line if you’ve ever been told you’re a bad, ungrateful, no-good, or worthless kid.”
* “Cross the line if you’ve ever felt pressure from your friends or an adult to do something you didn’t want to do and felt sorry or ashamed afterwards.”
* “Cross the line if you’ve ever felt ashamed for speaking from your heart or sharing your worries, fears, or secret hopes and dreams with someone.”
* “Cross the line if someone has ever been mean to you and you’ve been reluctant or too afraid to say anything about it.”
* “Cross the line if you’ve ever stood by and watched while someone was hurt or bullied and said or did nothing because you were too uncomfortable, shy, or afraid to say something.”

In pairs, have students debrief the activity:

--What are some feelings that came up for you during this activity?

--What was the hardest part for you?

--What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about others?

Whole class, have students debriefed the activity:

--What do you want to remember about what we’ve just experienced?

--What, if anything, do you want to share with others about this experience?

Sum it up: “When you crossed the line, that didn’t make you any less deserving of respect and caring. In fact, many of those times were probably when you needed respect and care the most. It’s important to know that our differences do not cause us to hurt one another. The differences, however, are used to justify already existing power imbalances in our society.

“For many of us, it takes courage to cross the line. If you noticed, lots of us crossed the line many times. Everyone here knows what it feels like to get hurt, or to see someone be hurt and not stand up for them. But maybe we forgot that hurt because we pushed it inside. If we can remember what we’ve shared here today –that we have all been hurt.

The goal of this activity is to help break down the barriers between students that perpetuate acts of unkindness. Young people become aware that others face many of the same insecurities, fears, and challenges that they do. They learn that showing your feelings doesn’t make you a weak person, rather it takes courage.