



## SUPPORTING, NOT BLAMING

When they see **Specs** approaching, **Fones** and a friend 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** offers support and **Specs** feels better. The next day when the same thing happens, **Specs** responds assertively.

### MESSAGE

Those who are bullied sometimes think they are to blame, adding to their pain and shame. Having someone to remind them of their worth helps with healing and self-esteem.

#### **Narrated Message**

*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.*

### ISSUES

- Children who are being bullied may assume they are somehow at fault
- Feeling blamed for being hurt increases the distress
- Fear and shame can prevent those who are bullied from asking for help
- Children who bully others may target a person's vulnerability or weaknesses
- Understanding the importance of providing support and repairing self-esteem

### STRATEGIES

- Letting children know that nobody ever deserves to be bullied
- Acknowledging the emotional and/or physical harm that results from being bullied
- Providing safe places for those who are bullied to come forward
- Coming to a better understanding of why bullies engage in the behaviour they do
- Exploring strategies for helping children rebuild their self-esteem
- Creating communities where bullying is addressed and not tolerated

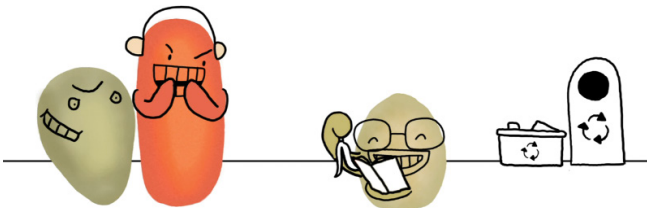
## QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

### Parents

1. What are some of the messages this vignette offers?
2. What are some of the reasons a child might assume they are to blame?
3. How would you describe the emotional impact bullying has?
4. Why do you think children might prey on others' weaknesses or vulnerabilities? Any ideas what could help prevent this?
5. How would you provide support and encourage healing if your child has been bullied? How might teachers and the school help you with this?
6. Can you think of some strategies you and the school could use for getting the message out that nobody deserves to be bullied?

### School Staff

1. What are some of the messages this vignette offers?
2. Have you observed the impact of being bullied on some of your students? How would you describe this?
3. How might you bolster the self-esteem of a bullied student in your classroom? Are there ways you could partner with parents in this effort?
4. Why do you think people that bully often prey on others' weaknesses or vulnerabilities? As an educator how might you help prevent this?
5. How does your school provide safe ways for students who have been bullied to get help and support?
6. Does your school clearly and consistently communicate the message that nobody deserves to be bullied? In what ways? Could the board help with this?
7. How does your school strive to build a positive school climate?



## RESOURCES

- Blaming of Targets  
[www.safeatschool.ca/index.php?q=plm/bullying-prevention/understanding-bullying/blaming-of-targets](http://www.safeatschool.ca/index.php?q=plm/bullying-prevention/understanding-bullying/blaming-of-targets)
- Victim-Blaming  
<http://bit.ly/19m0mal>
- Italian Elementary and Middle School Students Blaming the Victim of Bullying and Perception of School Moral Atmosphere  
[http://unipd.academia.edu/GianlucaGini/Papers/1049097/Italian\\_elementary\\_and\\_middle\\_school\\_students\\_blaming\\_the\\_victim\\_of\\_bullying\\_and\\_perception\\_of\\_school\\_moral\\_atmosphere](http://unipd.academia.edu/GianlucaGini/Papers/1049097/Italian_elementary_and_middle_school_students_blaming_the_victim_of_bullying_and_perception_of_school_moral_atmosphere)
- Stop Playing the “Blame Game”  
[www.stopbullyingwithedie.com/bullies-stop-playing-the-blame-game](http://www.stopbullyingwithedie.com/bullies-stop-playing-the-blame-game)
- Teens’ Take on Bullying  
[www.esciencenews.com/articles/2010/11/11/teens.take.bullying](http://www.esciencenews.com/articles/2010/11/11/teens.take.bullying)
- The Top Ten Myths about Victimization  
[www.bemidjistate.edu/academics/publications/social\\_work\\_journal/issue18/article6.html](http://www.bemidjistate.edu/academics/publications/social_work_journal/issue18/article6.html)
- Who is Blameworthy? Social Identity and Inter-group Bullying  
<http://spi.sagepub.com/content/28/1/77.abstract>

