

# Cultivating Empathy and Compassion in Adolescents

## About Bullying

- About 20% of students ages 12-18 experienced bullying nationwide.
- Students ages 12–18 who reported being bullied said they thought those who bullied them:
  - Had the ability to influence other students' perception of them (56%).
  - Had more social influence (50%).
  - Were physically stronger or larger (40%).
  - Had more money (31%).

## Why Bystanders Do Not Intervene

- Fear of retaliation and being bullied themselves.
- Fear of losing their social status.
- They are not friends with the target of the bullying.
- They do not know what to do to intervene or address bullying

## Why Bystanders Do Intervene

- Are friends with the target of bullying
- View the target of bullying as innocent
- Have empathy for the target of the bullying
- Believe teachers or school staff will appropriately address bullying (stopbullying.gov)

## Fitting In v. Belonging

- "Fitting in is about assessing a situation and becoming who you need to be in order to be accepted."
- "Belonging doesn't require us to change who we are; it requires us to be who we are" (Brown, 2012, p. 231-232).

## What is Empathy?

1. Perspective taking
2. Staying out of judgment
3. Recognize emotion
4. Communicate emotion (Wiseman, 1996)

## How is Empathy Different from Sympathy?

### Sympathy

- Feeling sorry for the other person.
- Imagining how we would feel if we were experiencing what is happening to them.

### Empathy

- Imagine what it is like being that person and experiencing things as they do, not as we would. (Wiseman, 1996)

***Empathy fuels connection. Sympathy drives disconnection (Brown, 2012).***

