The Crowd Can Change the Story

Essential question: What can one person do when they see someone being targeted online, and how can we make it less likely to happen again?

Overview

This lesson closes Module 4: Impact, Rights & Advocacy. Forty-seven people see cruel comments under Jad's drawing. Most scroll, a few like, and one person, Maya, decides not to scroll past. Students learn the three choices (**join, watch or upstand**), safe and quiet ways to upstand, why not to amplify hate, and how one message can change the social rule of a group. The lesson ends with **advocacy**: young people helping their school, peers and platforms make harm less likely. It draws on eSafety Commissioner guidance on upstanders, online hate and creating positive change, and ECPAT's youth-voice work.

Students will be able to

1. Describe the three choices when they see harm online: join, watch or upstand.
2. Choose a safe upstander move, including quiet options.
3. Explain why reposting hateful content can make it spread.
4. Plan one advocacy idea for their school or group.

Key vocabulary

Term	Meaning
Upstander	Someone who does something safe that helps the person being targeted or reduces the harm.
Bystander	Someone who sees harm and watches without helping.
Amplify	Make something reach more people, by liking, sharing, commenting or reposting.
Algorithm	The system an app uses to decide what people see. Engagement makes posts spread.
Advocacy	Speaking up and working for changes that make harm less likely to happen again.
Norm	The unwritten rule of a group about what is okay. Norms can change.

Materials

- Sticky notes, 2 per student
- Wall signs: Upstand, Watch, Join (wall-signs.pdf)

- Scenario cards, one set per group of 4 (scenario-cards.pdf)
- Student activity sheets, one per student (student-activity-sheets.pdf)
- Quiz, one per student (quiz.pdf)
- Family tips to send home (family-tips.pdf)
- The lesson video, at the top of the lesson web page (about 1 minute 45 seconds)

Before you teach

- **Safety first.** Students should never put themselves at risk to upstand. Quiet options count.
- **Keep it about the characters.** No naming real classmates or incidents.
- **Hate content.** Don't show real hateful posts in class. Describe them in general terms.
- **Plan for follow-up.** If students propose real advocacy ideas, consider how the school can respond.

If a student tells you they are being targeted

1. **Listen and thank them.** Say: "I'm glad you told me. You don't deserve this."
2. **Help save evidence:** screenshots of posts, comments, usernames and dates.
3. **Follow your anti-bullying and safeguarding policy**, and inform parents or carers where appropriate.
4. **Help report** using the platform's harassment or hate tools.
5. **Check on their wellbeing.** Share the National Lifeline 1564 (24/7).

Lesson procedure

Step	Time	Activity
1. Warm up	5 min	When the crowd changed
2. Learn	10 min	The video, and the three zones
3. Discuss	15 min	Scenario cards in groups
4. Create	12 min	Plan your upstander move
5. Wrap up	8 min	The 10-second upstander check, quiz and exit ticket

1. Warm up: When the crowd changed (5 min)

1. > *"Think of a time you saw a crowd change direction: in a game, a team, a class or a story. On one note, write what changed it. On the other, write who acted first."*
2. Group the notes. Point out: crowds follow the first people who act, for better or worse.

2. Learn: Upstand, watch, or join? (10 min)

1. Play the lesson video. Ask: > *"What did most people do? What did Maya do, and what happened next?"*

2. Walk through the three zones on page 1 of the student sheets.
3. Stress: upstanding doesn't have to be loud, and you never have to put yourself in danger.
4. Quick check: read each line below aloud and have students point to a sign.

Situation	Zone
Liking a cruel comment	Join
Scrolling past without doing anything	Watch
Reposting hate "to show how awful it is"	Join
Messaging the person: "I saw that. Are you okay?"	Upstand
Reporting quietly when speaking up isn't safe	Upstand
Asking the school for a reporting route students understand	Upstand

3. Discuss: Scenario cards (15 min)

1. Put students in groups of 4. Give each group 2 or 3 cards, including at least one Upstand card (3, 5, 6 or 8).
2. Groups decide the zone and answer the questions on their activity sheet.
3. Each group shares one card. Ask: *"What is the safest helpful move here? Does this person need backup?"*

4. Create: Plan your upstander move (12 min)

1. For one card, students write their safest upstander move, then one idea that would make it less likely to happen again at their school or in their group.
2. Students tick the statements on page 3 they feel sure about.

5. Wrap up (8 min)

1. Review the 10-second upstander check:

1 Harm?
Is someone being harmed, not just "is it funny?"

2 My tap?
Will a like, share or comment add to it?

3 Safest move?
Private support, report, or speak up?

4 Backup?
Do I need an adult, moderator or staff member?

2. Students complete the quiz (4 min), then go through the answers.
3. Students fill in the exit ticket. Close with: *"You don't need millions of followers to change an online space. Sometimes you just need to be the first person who refuses to join in."* Hand out the family tips.

Teacher key: scenario cards

Card	Zone	Signs to notice
1. Just a like	Join	Likes make a cruel comment look popular and push it higher.
2. Scroll past	Watch	Watching doesn't add harm, but Jad may still feel completely alone.
3. "Are you okay?"	Upstand	A private check-in means Jad isn't facing the crowd alone.
4. "Look how awful"	Join	Reposting hate, even to criticize it, gives it a bigger audience. It feeds the algorithm.
5. Not safe to speak up	Upstand	The best upstander move is the one that helps without creating more risk.
6. "Stop tagging him"	Upstand	One message changed the social rule of the group. Courage can be contagious too.
7. Arguing in the comments	Watch	Karim means well, but a big argument can push the post higher and draw a bigger crowd.
8. The poster campaign	Upstand	Advocacy: making it less likely to happen again.

This lesson completes the TFCSEA programme. Consider inviting students to turn their advocacy ideas into a real campaign.

Where to get help

Write these on the board, with your school counselor's name and room.

1564

National Lifeline for emotional support, open 24/7

LARA

Email for support and guidance: laraa@laraa.org

112

Internal Security Forces, if someone is in danger or threatened

Report tools (in every app): Most apps let you report a post, comment or account that bullies, humiliates or spreads hate.

Activity 6 answer guide: Reflect

Students complete three sentence starters. These are examples of strong answers, not the only right ones. Use them to check understanding and to correct the common misconception in each "Watch out for" line. Online, students see the same examples after they finish the activity.

1. One quiet way to upstand is...

Strong answers include:

- Reporting the post
- Not liking or sharing it
- Messaging the person privately: "Are you okay?"
- Telling a trusted adult
- Asking a friend to back me up

Watch out for: "Upstanding means calling people out in public." It doesn't have to be loud, and you never have to put yourself in danger.

2. I shouldn't repost hate to criticize it because...

Strong answers include:

- It gives it a bigger audience
- It feeds the algorithm
- It can hurt the person targeted all over again
- Reporting it and posting something better works instead

Watch out for: "Reposting with a critical caption is fine." It still spreads the original content.

3. One change I would like at my school is...

Strong answers include:

- A clear, private way to report online harm
- A student campaign on upstanding
- A trusted staff member students know they can go to
- Agreed rules about filming others at school
- Online-safety lessons for every grade

Watch out for: "I'm too young to change anything." You don't need lots of followers. Sometimes you just need to be the first person who refuses to join in.