

**Intended for Grades:** 4-12 **Estimated Time:** est.20-30 min.

**Lesson Title:** ~~Crushed~~ (Crushed)

**Lesson Purpose: Students will:**

- \* Experience and discuss a “visual message” that demonstrates the effects of bullying on any youth or adult
- \* Better understand the power of their words

**Materials & Preparation:**

- A clean sheet of printer paper for everyone (colored or white)
- A 5 x 8 card or half sheet of notebook paper and writing tool for all participants
- Current relevant facts about bullying (as desired and age appropriate (See 2011 data below)

**Background Information:**

The powerful and pervasive impact of bullying in schools has been highlighted in the recent past due to unfortunate suicides by youth who were targets of harassment. These highlighted deaths have shined the spotlight on the need to help improve the social/emotional environment at schools.

In order to learn, students need to feel safe. In order to feel safe, schools need to actively foster environments where everyone is treated with respect and dignity, and individual differences are honored.

Students will be able to thrive and collaborate when they understand that they have the ability to *live pono*, or choose to do the right thing. When everyone learns that each person brings gifts and talents to their school community, students can flourish and experience the true benefits of collaboration.

People are bullied in many different ways, from exclusion to physical abuse. Any experience can leave a mark. This understanding of the impact of bullying will hopefully help students become more impeccable and pono with their words.

*(Impeccable = above reproach; honest; Pono =what's fair and right)*

**Steps:**

**1.** Make sure each person has a new sheet of printer paper, a 5 x 8 index card (or a half sheet of notebook paper), and a writing tool.

**2.** Ask participants to look over the clean sheet of printer paper and to do a Quick-Write on what they notice about their sheet. Ask them to “Tell the Story” of their paper.

*(Quick-Write = write first thoughts on 5x8 card or half sheet (Ask students to focus on content, not conventions of print like spelling and grammar.)*

**3.** Instruct students to make one or two folds on their printer paper; ask them to observe their paper now and to talk to someone near them about their observations.

*Ask: What impact do you notice to your paper?*

4. Next, tell students to crush, even stomp on their sheet of paper (without ripping it). Use phrases like, “Crumble the sheet of paper; you can even stomp on it. See how small you can make it.”
5. Have students discuss the following, in partners, small groups, or whole class:  
*What do you notice now? How did you feel doing this?*
6. Allow some time for the students to reflect on the activity. Ask them what they want to do with the wad of paper. *(Many will want to toss it. Make sure they do not throw away the paper yet.)*
7. Ask students to open the paper and to try to get it back to its original shape. Discuss whether this is possible.
8. Prompt students to say they are sorry to the paper. Then discuss if saying you’re sorry will fix the paper.
9. Have students do a second Quick-Write on the back of the Card or half sheet of paper with the following prompts: *What do you notice now? How do you think the paper “feels”?*
10. Ask students if this activity reminds them of any personal experiences they have had or seen. *Invite students to discuss:*
  - How this activity is similar to being bullied
  - If the color of paper mattered
  - The difference between the first few folds and crushing the paper.*(Note: Use the most appropriate grouping format with your students. To support discussions, students can share their card responses.)*
11. Have a representative from each group share highlights of their discussion with the larger group.
12. Conclude with a statement similar to the following: *“Even though you apologized to the paper you couldn’t fix all the scars that were left behind from being stomped on or crushed down into the smallest wad possible. The scars are there forever. No apology or action can ever make the paper like it was before.”*

**Reflection Question:**

*What can we do (as individuals or a group) to make sure we don’t have people in our school who feel like they have been crushed, stomped on, or made to feel so small?*

**Resources:**

<https://mentalhealthhawaii.org/>

<http://www.bullyingstatistics.org/content/prevent-bullying.html>

Results from a 2011 Youth Survey  
of 9,438 Middle & High School Students  
from 76 Hawai'i Schools

<https://mentalhealthhawaii.org/>

- ➔ 41 % REPORTED BEING BULLIED AT SCHOOL
- ➔ 24% WERE CYBER-BULLED THROUGH EMAIL, CHAT ROOMS, IM, WEBSITES, OR TEXTING
- ➔ 30% FELT SAD OR HOPELESS (daily for 2+ weeks)
- ➔ 16% SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED SUICIDE
- ➔ 11% ATTEMPTED SUICIDE (in past 12 months)

Also Know That...

- ➔ KIDS WHO ARE OBESE, GAY, OR DISABLED ARE UP TO 63% MORE LIKELY TO BE BULLIED  
- National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, 2010
- ➔ 92% OF LGBT YOUTH HEAR NEGATIVE MESSAGES ABOUT BEING LGBT (from peers, at school, and on the internet) - National Human Rights Campaign Survey  
(LGBT = Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, or Trans-sexual)