



We understand that talking to our children about things happening at school or in the news can be a challenging conversation. Our Humane Education Team put together a few helpful tips to navigate these difficult conversations.

Approaching our differences with compassion is essential when talking to students about bullying and discrimination. Breaking down conversations into two components is very powerful. First, try to uncover the “why” of what is happening, and then empower the student to do something about it. (Compassion: Understanding how someone feels, and doing something about it.) With every situation we are faced with, we have two options- we can help to create peace, or we can help to create war.

### **WHY?**

- When people are hurting other people (or animals), most often it is because that person is feeling hurt (or war) on the inside. That doesn’t excuse their behaviors but recognizing that those actions are coming from a place of hurt can help us to have compassion for everyone, including the person being hurtful.
- People sometimes hurt others because they are uneducated. Talking about people’s differences in an open, honest, and respectful way can help shine light and understanding on other people’s backgrounds, ethnicities, disabilities, etc.
- If you hear your own child make a comment that could be considered hurtful, ask them why they said that, keep asking “why” in a respectful way, to get to the root of their comment. Then address the issue from there.

### **DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT**

- Encourage your child to be a self-advocate. If someone is being hurtful to them or to others, empower them to respond by clearly stating “I’m uncomfortable with what you just said or did.” “I don’t like what you are saying or doing.” Tone of voice matters- it’s important for students to be able to stand up for themselves and for others, but they need to know how to respond in a respectful and calm manner.
- If communicating with the person who is being hurtful does not work, encourage your child to seek help from a trusted adult. Make a list of adults in your child’s life that they could speak to. Let them know that if they tell an adult and the adult doesn’t help the situation, it is OKAY (and necessary) to tell another adult. Often times students feel defeated and helpless if they tell an adult and the adult doesn’t handle the situation in a way that is helpful to them.
- Brainstorm or role play different scenarios your child may be facing. With each scenario ask your child how can they create peace in that situation, and how they could encourage others to do so as well.

**Things to remember:**

- It's okay to not have all the answers. Telling your child that you don't know, but you are willing to find out is a powerful tool. Research topics or problems together to create a sense of trust.
- Students are always watching and repeating what they see the adults in their lives doing. If we are telling our students to practice compassion, but are not being that example for them, we cannot expect them to practice it either.

To learn more about Wayside Waifs' Humane Education and No More Bullying programs, visit our website [WaysideWaifs.org](http://WaysideWaifs.org)