



## Standing Up for Yourself and Others

### Materials:

- Worksheet

**Brainstorm:** What do you think it means to stand up for yourself? What about standing up for others? Is there a difference?

**Discuss:** Pressure to act a certain way or to do something happens to most of us. It could be pressure from a family member to go to a specific college or pressure from a friend to do something you know you shouldn't do. Or sometimes we observe someone pressuring someone else doing something that they don't appear to want to do. This could happen within your own group of friends! Maybe they're pressuring a friend to host a party at their house when their parents are not home. Either way, there is pressure from one person to another to do something that they are not fully sure of or comfortable with.

**Dive in!** Applying pressure to someone is not the same thing as bullying, although it might feel like it at the moment. Standing up for yourself or others is easier if you are clear on what you believe. Knowing what is important to you is the first step to taking a stand. We've spent quite a bit of time during our first module of Emozi talking about and thinking about what is important to each of us. So the first step for us is to review the activities we covered on our strengths and interests, self-confidence and self-esteem, our values and integrity and our point of view. The next thing to consider is whether or not this is a "battle" that you need to fight. Again, knowing what you value will help you to determine whether this is something you must take on. Not all situations require you to defend what you believe. Third, once you decide to stand up for yourself or someone else, you need to take action! If you've determined that something must be said, say it clearly. There is no point in having values if you aren't willing to act upon them. However, how you say what you need to say is also important. Strive to be respectful. Try to use words that do not attack or hurt the other person. Put downs and swearing have no place when defending your values or standing up for others. Here are 3 easy to follow steps:

1. State your position.



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2. Explain your reason.
3. Express understanding.

Fourth, it can become very easy for emotions to become heated during these situations, but try to remain objective and calm. It's much easier to express your point of view when you are calm. It is more effective because the other person may feel less defensive and have a greater chance of seeing your side. Finally, remember what your objective is during these types of situations. It is not necessarily for you to change the other person's mind, merely to express where you stand. Robert F. Kennedy once said, "Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events. It is from countless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

**Activity:** Working with a partner, have students complete the worksheet. If there is time, share the responses as a class. Discuss which statements they most agree with.

**Reflect:** In thinking about a time I had to stand up for myself or someone else, what values was I drawing on? Did I communicate my point of view in a way that was effective? What might I have done differently? Why would this benefit me?

### Extend and Enrich

Look at the biography of Greta Thunberg here:

<https://www.biography.com/activist/greta-thunberg>

Listen to Greta's speech at the United Nations COP25:

[https://youtu.be/Eo\\_-mxvGnq8](https://youtu.be/Eo_-mxvGnq8)

What can we learn from Greta's methods for delivering her messages? What makes her so effective? How can we use these insights to help us stand up for our values?

### For Further Study

Assertive communication <https://youtu.be/vlwmmfiCb-vc>



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What's the difference between aggressive and assertive communication? Why is assertive communication better?

Ash Beckham: When to take a stand - and when to let it go.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/ash\\_beckham\\_when\\_to\\_take\\_a\\_stand\\_and\\_when\\_to\\_let\\_it\\_go](https://www.ted.com/talks/ash_beckham_when_to_take_a_stand_and_when_to_let_it_go)

How do we decide to take a stand or not?

**Professional Development:** The podcast 52 Essential Conversations to Inspire Children for Life is hosted by Harvard researcher, educator and parent, Jenny Woo. Listen to the episode at <https://52convos.libsyn.com/001-standing-up-how-to-find-your-voice> to learn about ways to teach your students how to find their voice, and then answer the following questions:

1. How do you empower your students to find their voice?
2. Does your classroom create a space where students are able to find and speak their truth?