

OpenLearn animation

Bullying and Manipulation: Join the Resistance

Narrator:

Let's head to the playground of a community school, where parents have noticed one girl, Emma, is using bullying behaviour towards girls in the playground.

But another girl, Mia, seems completely unaffected. Her classmates say she's just 'unbullyable'. So, what exactly is her trick?

Well, here's Emma approaching Mia, shouting 'Moaning Mia, moaning Mia! And such bullying classics as 'No-one likes you', 'You smell bad', and ending on 'You can't come to Orla's party because you always drop your food down your ugly clothes'.

So, what will Mia do next?

She simply says, 'What is wrong with you?', before calmly walking away.

But, what's this? Mia looks back and Orla, whose party it is, smiles as if to say, 'Sorry.'

And that's it! So, what's so great about Mia's approach?

Well, firstly, she didn't engage with the bullying tactics. She showed that bullying was 'wrong', reinforcing expectations and norms of behaviour.

You'll notice she put the responsibility squarely on the bully themselves. The person being bullied is not to blame.

Then, she walked away, preventing escalation. She stayed in control and went to something more enjoyable. She didn't ruminate on Emma's cruel comments.

Her school's culture supports her. Its community ethos champions diversity and equal opportunity. Students are obviously rewarded for their achievements but there's never any talk of 'losers'.

This helps Mia feel secure. There's no need to worry about being socially excluded for standing up to bullies.

Her friends showed solidarity. They didn't enable the bully.

And that is why little Mia is simply 'unbullyable'.