

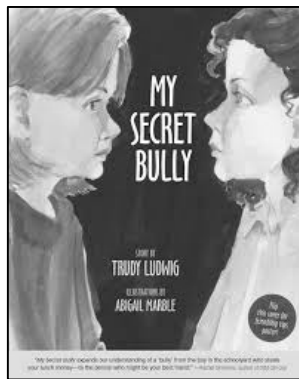
CORNERSTONE CORNER

Project Cornerstone, a YMCA of Silicon Valley Initiative

THIS MONTH'S BOOK:

MY SECRET BULLY BY TRUDY LUDWIG

Today in your child's classroom, I read the book *My Secret Bully* by Trudy Ludwig. *My Secret Bully* is a story of how a girl named Katie bullies her close friend Monica making her feel unwelcome and isolated from her friends. Monica's mom notices Monica's sudden stomachaches and asks if something is going on at school. Her mom listens to Monica, which leaves Monica feeling loved, appreciated and accepted. With support and advice of her mother, Monica learns to reclaim her personal power.



UPSTANDER PLEDGE

I am an UPSTANDER.

I have the POWER
to INFLUENCE MY PEERS.

I SAY something OR DO something
when you need help.

I am there FOR you.

I WILL help you get
the help you need.

YOU ARE NOT alone.

I have YOUR back.

Whether your child is a target, a bystander or the instigator of relational aggression, you can help.

- Help them bring secrets of peer abuse into the open. Let your child know they are not alone.
- Be a thoughtful listener. Listen without interrupting. Afterwards, ask what kind of help your child needs. Sometimes, just sharing the problem helps them figure out what to do.
- If they need help, offer suggestions about how to respond to bullying and role-play their response.
- Brainstorm *positive self-talk* words and phrases that will empower your child.
- Continue to practice the ABC tools.
- Enlist other family members and caring adults to support your child.
- Open a conversation about bullying issues with your child's teacher. Arrange a conference to discuss your concerns. Help your child create a plan for safety and support at school.

The term for what Monica experiences is **relational bullying**: subtle emotional bullying including "under the radar" actions like spreading rumors, intimidating and humiliating, excluding and ignoring. These behaviors are often devastating to a child's self-esteem and their sense of social belonging.

After reading the book we discussed what happened in the story, whether anyone had experienced anything like what happened to Monica, and what to do if it did happen. We talked about *positive self-talk*, messages you say to yourself to keep you strong, qualities to look for in a friend and ways to be a good friend to others.



WHAT CAN
WE DO AT
home?

On the back of this letter is a list of the ABC tools your child has learned in the ABC Program. Please help them practice these tools by role-playing different situations with your child.