

Wrap up this activity by asking students to name situations when a talking hand might help them. Ask, “What feeling do you have during these situations? How will you get yourself to use a talking hand and not a fighting hand?”

## ACTIVITY 5

### *Stop!*

#### WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

This communication skill is extremely helpful for students who need to learn how to set clear boundaries. When used effectively, this strategy can tell others that there are words and behaviors that are not acceptable in a communication interaction.

**Early Childhood/Elementary** The teacher models the following for students: Step back, use wide eyes and a serious face, put your hands up like a stop sign close to your body with fingers spread, looking serious. Say “Stop” slowly and with a serious-sounding voice. The step back makes all the difference in this technique. It calms emotions and puts some physical distance between students who are feeling upset.

Ask your class to practice the above technique as a group several times together. This consolidates the motor memory for the action and is a safe way for reluctant or shy students to practice the skill. It also allows the teacher to look at which students need additional coaching on how to use their body language in a strong, clear way.

Wrap up this activity by asking for volunteers to demonstrate their stop gesture. Have students identify situations where they could benefit from using this communication tool in real life. What should they do if it does not work? Remind students that it is okay to seek adult help when they feel mistreated. Tell students they can say, “Am I going to have to get a teacher?” sounding like you’d rather they cooperate than have to get a grown-up.

## ACTIVITY 6

### *Walk Away and Ignore Teasing, Rudeness, and Hurtful Interactions*

#### WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Many students are told to ignore hurtful words or teasing and walk away. However, students need to learn how to use this nonverbal strategy with people who treat them unkindly. Some girls and boys who communicate with a gentler style will need to be coached on how to use this strategy effectively. If they are given the opportunity to practice how to use appropriate volume, serious tone, face and hands, it should be easier for them to cope with unkind words and behaviors. This strategy provides students with an assertive way to stand up for themselves.

**Early Childhood/Elementary** The teacher takes the first turn. Stand tall, widen your eyes, put your hands up in a stop gesture to nonverbally say, “I don’t let people treat me this way.” Then turn and walk away slowly and deliberately. Call out to a student who looks accepting, “Hey, Mia, that looks fun. Can I join you?” Explain to your students that when you walk away, it’s helpful to move toward people and situations that will create happier feelings for them.

Ask your students to practice this same sequence (stand tall; widen eyes; place hands in stop sign; walk away) in unison. Prompt younger students who need help remembering all the steps. Invite individual volunteers to demonstrate the steps. Ask students to name a situation where they might use this tool. Discuss with students that it is the way they move their bodies that effectively communicates “Stop!” Show your students “wimpy” ways to use the body so they can see the difference. Explain that when we don’t use the body in a serious “I mean it” way, people are less likely to respect and cooperate with our requests.