

How may banter become bullying?

Banter & Bullying Toolkit from the Anti-Bullying Alliance

1. Topic of the banter – topics that are sensitive, personal, appearance based, or use offensive language are often considered not appropriate to joke about as banter.
2. The relationship with the person – banter is more likely to be received positively by people or friendship groups that you know and are close to.
3. Where the banter is happening – if the banter happens in more public settings or includes individuals beyond a friendship group, then this is more likely to be perceived as bullying.
4. Whether the banter is repeated – if the banter is repeated many times, then it may stop being funny.
5. The intent behind the banter – is the intent to cause harm, discomfort, social division/exclusion or public embarrassment?
6. The size of the audience – as group size increases the acceptability of banter may decrease.
7. The reactions of the target – if the person receiving the banter feels uncomfortable, regardless of the initial intent, the banter may be perceived as bullying.
8. Interpreting the online world – in some cases the meaning of our wording online and use of emojis, memes and gifs, can be ambiguous or may be used to try to pass bullying behaviour off as banter.

How may banter become bullying? (continued)

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Scenario 1

Faiza edits a photo she has of herself and her friend Jessica to make them look funny and sends the photo to Jessica and their other friend Fiona over WhatsApp. Fiona adds two of their other friends to the group chat, who then can see the edited photo. Members of that group chat then tease Faiza and Jessica about the edited photo.

- 1.How would Fiona know that her 'banter' has become hurtful and therefore not banter?
- 2.How could Jessica and Faiza stand up for themselves?
- 3.How would the bystanders be able to help?

Scenario 2

Jack and his friends are talking about another friend from school, Ben, who isn't there. Jack is making teasing comments about Ben and his hobbies. Jack then repeats the teasing to Ben in front of the class, leaving Ben feeling very upset. Although Jack can see Ben is upset, he continues to finish what he's saying.

- 1.How would Jack know that his 'banter' has become hurtful and therefore not banter?
- 2.How could Ben stand up for himself?
- 3.How would the bystanders be able to help?

Scenario 3

Sarah has been told a secret about Jo who is a girl in her year that she doesn't know. The secret about Jo is personal. Sarah then posts Jo's secret on her Snapchat story for all of her friends to see. Jo then sees her secret on other people's Snapchat story.

- 1.How would Sarah know that her 'banter' has become hurtful and therefore not banter?
- 2.How could Jo stand up for herself?
- 3.How would the bystanders be able to help?

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Scenario 4

Ade, Tyler and Conor keep emptying their water bottle into John's lunch bag, leaving John's lunch inedible. They think it's really funny. John is not friends with the 3 boys. This is witnessed by others in the class.

- 1.How would Ade, Tyler, and Conor, know that their 'banter' has become hurtful and therefore not banter?
- 2.How could John stand up for himself?
- 3.How would the bystanders be able to help?

Scenario 5

Amanda teases Grace about her acne in front of their friends and others in the room. Amanda says it was only a joke, but Grace has confided in Amanda and their friends about how much her acne upsets her in the past.

- 1.How would Amanda know that her 'banter' has become hurtful and therefore not banter?
- 2.How could Grace stand up for herself?
- 3.How would the bystanders be able to help?

Scenario 6

Rhys videos Alex without him knowing whilst messing around with his friends, dancing in a childish way. Rhys then directly messages Alex over Instagram and sends him the video. Rhys then makes negative comments to Alex about him in the video but uses laughing face emoji's. Alex show's some of his friends the comments.

- 1.How would Rhys know that his 'banter' has become hurtful and therefore not banter?
- 2.How could Alex stand up for himself?
- 3.How would the bystanders be able to help?



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Nottingham Trent
University
Psychology