

# Dignity for All (DFA): An Evidence-Based Safe and Supportive Schools Program

Dignity for All (DFA) is an innovative digital learning tool to prevent bullying and discrimination in school communities and develop remediation skills among students, teachers and parents to help repair the harm caused by bullying incidents.

“DFA is a really effective approach to bullying.”

– 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher, MS 354



## Let Us Help You Create a Safe and Supportive Environment

### Dignity For All (DFA): A blended-learning program to end violence and bullying in schools

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, about 20 percent of students ages 12–18 reported being bullied at school during the 2017 school year. Over 3.2 million students are targets of bullying each year. One in four teachers see nothing wrong with bullying, and will only intervene four percent of the time. We need education in every school so that each community member understands what bullying is and how it can be prevented.

DFA is a curriculum rooted in recent findings in neurobiology and attachment theory that is intended for middle school audiences. It is a preventative and healing approach to childhood trauma that is a leading cause of bullying behavior and toxic stress. DFA gives students, parents, teachers and other school professionals the tools they need to build skills in reflection, empathy and teamwork in order to create a safe and more supportive environment for the entire school community. Urban Tech has created the **ACID**<sup>®</sup> test to describe the four components of bullying so that it can be identified and addressed: **A**ggressive, **C**ontinuous, **I**mbalance of power, and **D**eliberate. This checklist helps to separate bullying from other behavior and provides a quick and effective method to identify and intervene as an upstander before serious harm is done.

DFA is aligned with **SEL standards** and is designed to produce supportive and caring culture in classrooms and throughout the whole school community. A year-long implementation inspires group values of positive relationships, self & social-awareness and skills that support those values that will last a lifetime.

## Learning Goals



### ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE:

Quest 1 provides background information on what bullying is, elaborates on the different forms it can take, and describes the impact that the physical brain has on emotional decisions.



### CHANGING ATTITUDES:

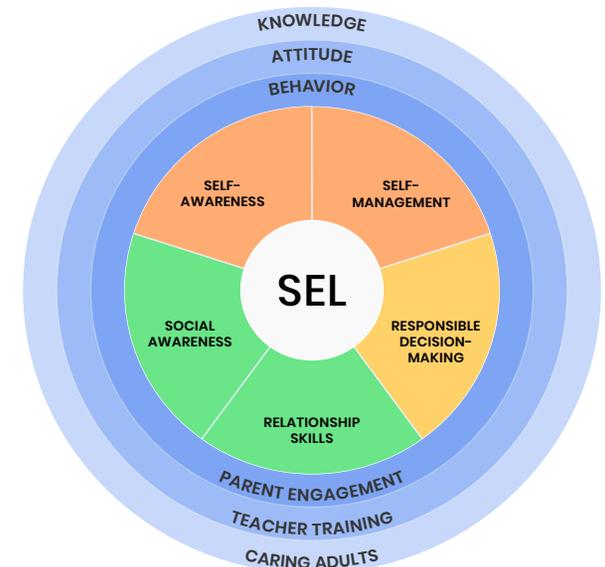
Quest 2 relates that information to the importance of empathy and reflection to change attitudes, and encourages students to examine their core beliefs, needs, and long-term goals.



### TRANSFORMING BEHAVIOR:

Quest 3 inspires students to create classroom value statements, practice peer-to-peer behavioral skills that support those values, and use restorative inquiry to create a safe and supportive climate.

### DFA meets social-emotional learning (SEL) standards:



## DFA includes activities to engage students and to promote positive values, empathy for others and respect for all



**On the Reel** uses videos to expose students to storylines and characters that depict teenagers facing real-life issues. It includes activities that inspire students to make personal connections and reflect critically on the topics of bullying and social awareness.



**Break It Down** allows students to evaluate what they have learned from the Unit through both written and discussion-based character analyses. This activity helps students understand the role they play in their school community and at home.



**Behind the Scenes** uses text-based background stories of each character as an empathy-building activity that connects the reader to the beliefs and attitudes of the characters from On the Reel. These stories and role-playing activities inspire students to empathize with others and strive to understand opposing perspectives.



**Write to the Point** allows students to reflect privately through a series of journal entry prompts, teaching students to put their emotions, thoughts, and values into words.



**Just the Facts** provides close reading strategies and informational text with statistics, facts, theory-based concepts, and background information where students can find evidence to support their collaborative discussions, writing, and digital projects.



**We Got Game** includes a broad range of engaging, interactive exercises that encourage students to integrate what they have learned in a gaming format. Activities include individual critical thinking tasks, music games, and group projects.



**Final Answer** tests content mastery through both self-assessment and assessment by an instructor, and raises students' awareness about their own styles, attitudes, beliefs, and learning preferences. Assessment is designed to be interactive, informative, and engaging. Pre-tests also reside within this section to provide baseline measurements.



**Glossary** defines academic and topic-specific vocabulary that students encounter throughout the Unit, and provides sample sentences for stronger understanding.



**Hot Link Library** provides an expansive collection of current resources and links to help teachers and students research the topics covered in the Unit.

Urban Tech is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit educational corporation founded in 1995 in an effort to close the digital/tech divide for low-income youth and adults in underserved communities. Urban Tech has established computer centers in over 500 locations across the U.S. to improve access to information and educational services to assist in the development of computer and vocational literacy. For over 20 years, Urban Tech has implemented an e-learning platform for building trust and respect, learning the value of reaching out and helping others, and enhancing social and emotional skills for success in school and life. Dignity for All (DFA), a trauma-informed bullying prevention program, was announced for whole-school implementation in 2018 to support students, teachers and parents to examine their core values and beliefs and learn the importance of relationships for creating a safer and more supportive climate for education.

### Urban Tech is grounded in four principles:

**Innovating** creative applications to teach social and emotional skills.

**Inspiring** our students to be critical thinkers, problem-solvers and thoughtful leaders in the community.

**Increasing** the number of caring adults for safe and supportive school environments.

**Investing** in administrators, teachers, and parents with professional development to ensure a high-quality education for all students.

“Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.”

([stopbullying.gov](http://stopbullying.gov))