3.4.1 ROLE PLAYING

It is a dramatic representation of conflict situations that are relevant to the person. The characteristic feature of role playing is the assumption of a certain role, in relation to which the subject acts in the dramatic scene with a great deal of freedom in behaviour and decision-making. This technique allows individuals to test themselves in other roles, to bring out their own experiences and the emotional tension attached to them.

Here is a Role-Playing activity to propose in class:

Objectives: to promote awareness of the problem, to develop empathy and understand the target's emotions, to reflect on the responsibility of observers.

Implementation: the teacher invites the pupils to write a short text in which they recount a bullying episode they have experienced or witnessed as observers.
The texts are read out to the classmates and one is chosen to be interpreted by role playing.
The "actors" for the roles of CYP engaged in bullying behaviour, target and observer are identified among the children; the story is interpreted in strict accordance with what is written.
The actors are asked how they felt while "pretending" to be the target
or the observers:
- how did I feel?
- how would I feel if it really happened to me?

Then, the pupils can split into groups of 4-5 and try to outline a possible solution for the target to find help.
Taking turns, each group proposes the identified solution, which is immediately represented by the 'actors' to see what could happen in the various cases; the group reflects on the effectiveness or otherwise of the proposed solutions.
The discussion can be guided by the following questions:
- What does it feel like to be bullied?
- What can be the consequences for a bullied child?
- What is the most effective solution? Why?
- What should a child do if he/she is bullied?
Thorough examination of this subject: reflect on the role of observers:
- what do you feel when you see a fellow pupil being bullied?
- how do you behave? why?
- can your behaviour improve or worsen the target's situation?
- what could you do to help the target?

Variation: Repeat the same activity, assigning each pupil a different role from the one previously played, so that each pupil has the opportunity to try out the roles of target, CYP engaged in bullying behaviour and observer.

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