



Bullying Prevention & Intervention (3rd Edition)

Resources

- **Bully Beware Productions, 1421 King Albert Avenue, Coquitlam, British Columbia, Canada V3J 1Y3 888-552-8559.** bully@direct.ca; <http://www.bullybeware.com> Producer of videos, posters, and books for students and teachers on taking action against bullying.
- **“Bully Dance” Videotape.** 10 minutes with discussion guide, grades 2-12, college and adult. This delightful, provocative, non-verbal animated film about dealing with bullies, peer pressure, and imbalance of power was produced in 2000 by the National Film Board of Canada. Available from Bullfrog Films, Box 149, Oley, PA 19547.
- **Espelage, D. L., & Swearer, S. M. (Eds.). (2004). *Bullying in American schools: A social-ecological perspective on prevention and intervention.* New Jersey: Erlbaum.** This book provides information regarding bullying research and putting research into practice to address the issue of bullying.
- **Garrity, C., Jens, K., Porter, W., Sager, N., & Short-Camilli, C. (1994). *Bully-proofing your school: A comprehensive approach for elementary schools.* Longmont, CO: Sopris West.** Provides detailed anti-bullying program information handouts, role-play scenarios, instructions training curriculum, and resources.
- **Hoover, J. H., & Oliver, R. (1996). *The bullying prevention handbook: A guide for principals, teachers and counselors.* Bloomington, IN: National Education Services.** Describes program, & provides instruction, materials, eval. tools, & checklists.
- **Newman-Carlson, D., Horne, A. & Bartolomucci, C. *Bully Busters Grds 6-8. (2000) and Grds K-5 (2003).*** These are teacher’s manuals for helping bullies, victims and bystanders. Champaign, IL: Research Press
- **Olweus, D., & Limber, S. (1999). *Bullying prevention program.* In D. S. Elliot (Ed.), *Blueprints for violence prevention.* Denver, CO: C&M Press.** This book describes a comprehensive bullying prevention program, gives empirical evidence on its effectiveness, provides timelines for implementation, and includes program evaluation procedures.
- **Supplemental lesson plans for the Bullying Prevention Program** (targeted for middle school children) may be obtained at a cost of \$5 by contacting Dr. Susan Limber, Institute for Families in Society, University of South Carolina, Carolina Plaza, Columbia, SC 29208 Phone 803-777-1529; Fax 803-777-1120.
- **Bully On Line.** <http://www.successunlimited.co.uk/> Provides insight and information on all types of bullying including child bullying, bullying in schools, and bullying by adults.
- **Telecom Police Stop Bullying Campaign.** <http://www.nobully.org.nz/> Website provides information for students, parents and teachers.

In the last few years, incidents of violent retribution by victims of bullying have led to an increased awareness of this phenomenon. A large number of students report having been bullied during school. Bullying may have a serious negative effect on these students. Bullying prevention programs are school-wide efforts designed to send a message that bullying is not acceptable in school and to teach students, teachers, and parents how to respond to bullying.

What is Bullying?

In the past, bullying had been narrowly defined as physical harassment; however, researchers have now expanded the definition to encompass any form of aggression in which one student or one group of students repeatedly harasses a victim verbally or physically without provocation (Olweus, 1993). The three key components of bullying behavior are: 1) the behavior is intended to harm, 2) the behavior occurs repeatedly over time, and 3) there is an imbalance of power (Olweus, 1993; Nansel et al., 2001).

Although the view of bullying is changing, adults sometimes view it as a normal part of childhood. The old adages of “boys will be boys” and “it’s just harmless fun” are now being challenged. Recent studies within the United States have found 8.4% (Nansel et al., 2001) to 20% (Limber & Small, 2000) of children report being victimized several times per week. In addition, 24.2% (Nansel et al., 2001) to 44.6% (Haynie, et al., 2001) report being victimized at least once during the past year. Therefore, bullying is a problem that affects 25% to 50% of all school-aged youth.

Most bullying occurs in places with little adult supervision, such as playgrounds and hallways, but bullying regularly occurs in classrooms as well. Bullies typically overpower their victims, either physically or psychologically and have more positive attitudes towards the use of violence than other students. Victims of bullying tend to be more anxious and insecure than other students and commonly react by crying, withdrawal, and avoidance when attacked. Unfortunately, such reactions may only reinforce the bullies’ sense of power over the victims (Olweus, 1993). Researchers have currently identified a third group in the bullying arena: bully-victims (i.e., students who both bully others and are bullied themselves); bully-victims may, in fact, be the most impaired group in terms of depression and anxiety (Swearer et al., 2001). Finally, the role of bystanders (i.e., students who witness bullying) cannot be ignored and is often a critical component to intervention

Bullying has serious consequences not only for victims and bullies, but for the entire school. Victims report feeling vengefulness, anger, and self-pity after a bullying incident (Borg, 1998). Left untreated, such reactions can evolve into depression, physical illness, and even suicide. In addition, students who engage in aggressive and bullying behaviors during their school years may take part in criminal and aggressive behavior during and after adolescence (Olweus, 1993). In classrooms exhibiting high numbers of bullying problems, students feel less safe and are less satisfied with school life (Olweus & Limber, 1999).

Bullying is often tolerated and ignored. Some have estimated that teachers rarely detect bullying and only intervene in 4% of all bullying incidents (Craig & Pepler, 1997). In addition, students tend to believe that bullied students are at least partly to blame for their victimization, that bullying makes the victims tougher, and that teasing is simply done in fun (Oliver, Hoover & Hazler, 1994). Students often believe, even if the bullying is reported, that nothing will be done (Hoover, Oliver, & Hazler, 1992).

What We Know About Bullying Prevention & Intervention

Effective bullying prevention and intervention programs rely on a number of components to reduce and prevent bullying problems (Olweus & Limber, 1999). Through improved supervision, classroom rules against bullying, positive and negative consequences for following and violating rules, and serious talks with the bullies and victims, bullying intervention plans strive to develop a school environment characterized by warmth and

positive adult involvement. Other programs include a school conference day to discuss bullying, meetings with parents of bullies and victims, and regular classroom meetings. At the elementary level, worksheets, role-plays, and relevant literature may be incorporated into existing curricula. Such measures give the message that “Bullying is not accepted in our school.”

Individual interventions (e.g., counseling for victims, disciplinary actions) are somewhat effective but may not significantly reduce overall bullying behavior. However, comprehensive bullying prevention programs have been implemented and evaluated in many countries with encouraging results (Smith & Ananiadou, 2003).

Current research shows that well-designed bullying prevention and intervention programs can reduce bully/victim problems, and significantly improve overall school environment. In the year following a comprehensive intervention program, researchers recorded a 50% decrease in the numbers of bullying incidents while also reducing the intensity of these problems (Olweus, 1993). The program also had a preventative effect, reducing the number and percentage of new victims of bullying; general antisocial behaviors such as fighting, vandalism, and truancy also decreased, while student satisfaction with their school increased. Other studies (Elsea & Smith, 1998; Smith, 1997) have reported similar results.

Making it Work

Effective programs have two key prerequisites: awareness and adult involvement. In order to create a school environment that discourages bullying, school staff and parents must become aware of the extent of bully/victim problems in their own school. In addition, effective bullying prevention also requires a commitment on the part of all adults to reduce or eliminate bullying.

Coordination. The majority of bullying prevention and intervention programs recommend a bullying intervention committee at the school level and a coordinator of bullying intervention activities and curricula. Committees typically assess the extent of the problem by administering an anonymous student questionnaire. Using these data, the committee can match components, materials, and training to specific local needs.

Creating Awareness. Most bullying prevention and intervention programs recommend a one-half to one-day training session for all staff members in order to educate them about the program. A school-wide policy regarding bullying behavior and expectations of staff and students should be presented. Several programs recommend follow-up sessions a few times during the school term to discuss problems with the program and provide continuing education. Many effective bullying prevention programs use buttons, posters, and mailings to maintain awareness and student interest in the program.

Ongoing Implementation & Evaluation. Questionnaires, surveys, checklists, or interviews can be used to measure effectiveness of the program and to identify problem areas. Reported incidents of bullying can also be tracked and monitored.

Conclusion

Bullying is a serious matter involving a substantial number of students. Most bullying occurrences are undetected or ignored, leading to detrimental physical and psychological effects for victims and bullies as well as on school climate. Well-conducted bullying intervention programs can be effective in reducing the number of bullying incidents and creating an environment that discourages bullying behavior.

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About the Safe and Responsive Schools Project

The Safe and Responsive Schools Project, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, is dedicated to developing prevention-based approaches to school safety, discipline reform and behavior improvement in schools.

Websites: <http://www.indiana.edu/~safeschl/> or <http://www.unl.edu/srs/> Or Contact:

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