

Resources - Bullying Prevention & Intervention

Tiers 1, 2 & 3

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Many programs have been created and marketed to address bullying in schools. However, only a select few have research supporting their effectiveness. This brief outlines several evidence-based interventions currently available in the U.S. market. More information on each program can be obtained from individual websites. Also listed are some other resources that may be useful in developing a bullying prevention or intervention program.

Every school has different needs when it comes to bullying prevention and intervention. Each of the outlined programs provides various degrees of supports for schools. Each can serve as the basis of a comprehensive bullying prevention and intervention strategy. Schools are encouraged to consider the programs that best fit their needs for intervention, the intended target audience (whether prevention or intervention oriented), time available for training, costs and other factors.

Bully Busters

Population. Bully Busters is a school-wide intervention for bullying prevention. Separate age appropriate manuals are available for elementary, middle, and high school teachers and staff. Further, a parent guide is available for increasing parent involvement.

Program description. Eight modules are taught at the elementary level and seven are taught at the middle school level. These lessons are typically taught at the classroom level, although they may be adapted to be implemented individually, in groups, or school wide (Newman-Carlson & Horne, 2004). Activities include worksheets, role plays, discussions, and craft projects. Module 1 focuses on increasing awareness, in particular, and encourages students to draw a picture of “what they think and feel a bully looks like” (Horne, Stoddard, & Bell, 2007, p. 267). Students are instructed to not include any identifying information in their pictures, but are merely reminded to draw their impressions of the bully. Pictures are often displayed in central locations to empower victims and allow bullies to view how they are perceived by others. Following this activity, the group leader may begin a discussion about the bully-victim continuum and the dynamic nature of bullying roles. Other lessons consist of evidence-based information about recognizing bullies and victims, the bully-victim cycle, how to assist students with helping each other, and relaxation strategies (Horne et al., 2007).

Teacher education is provided predominantly through staff development training workshops. Examples of the seven training modules include, “Increasing Awareness of Bullying, Recognizing the Bully, Recognizing the Victim, Taking Charge: Interventions for Bullying Behavior, Assisting Victims: Recommendations and Interventions, The Role of Prevention, and Relaxation and Coping Strategies” (Newman-Carlson & Horne, 2004, p. 261). Bully Busters was created on

the premise that bullying arises from student social skills deficits and that these deficits can best be acquired by “increasing awareness, knowledge, and efficacy of teachers regarding how to deal with school-based aggression and bullying” (Bell, Raczynski, & Horne, 2010, p. 258). In recent years, The Bully Busters curriculum has also grown to include not only a parent component, but an entire parent manual, *A Parent’s Guide to Understanding and Responding to Bullying: The Bully Buster’s Approach*. Psycho-educational parent groups may use this manual and the principles from the program to help parents of bullies and victims support their child’s utilization of prosocial skills, strengthen the parent-child relationship, empowering parents, increase parent-child communication, and reduce stress (Horne et al., 2007).



At the high school level, Bully Busters takes a peer leader format. Select upperclassmen are trained to serve as peer leaders who work with other students to address bullying and related topics such as conflict resolution and dating violence.

Research support. Several empirical studies have been conducted supporting the use of Bully Busters to prevent and intervene in bullying. Orpinas, Horne, & Staniszewski (2003) found that a whole school bullying prevention program that included components of the elementary school Bully Busters curriculum led to a reduction in self-reported aggressive behavior among kindergarten through 5th grade students. In another student, teachers who were trained using the curriculum demonstrated better knowledge of bullying and skills to intervene in bullying than did a control group of teachers (Browning, Cooker, & Sullivan, 2005). At the middle school level, the program has been shown to increase teacher knowledge, increase teachers’ belief that they are able to address bullying, and decrease office referrals for bullying (Newman-Carlson & Horne, 2004). However, published studies evaluating the effectiveness of the high school curriculum are not yet available. Thus, the Bully Busters program has several research studies supporting its use in elementary and middle schools, but no data are available supporting its use in high schools.

Further information. The Bully Busters manuals are available via Research Press Publishers at <https://www.researchpress.com/books/455/bully-busters>. As “Bully Busters” is a common name for bullying intervention programs, interested schools should confirm that the program they are selecting is authored by Dr. Arthur Horne of the University of Georgia.

Bully-Proofing Your School

Population. Bully-Proofing Your School is a school-wide bullying prevention and intervention program. It has been designed for elementary and middle school populations.

Program description. In this psychoeducational intervention, which can be adapted for small group or individual use, students are taught to recognize the different types of bullying, to promote problem-solving for themselves and among their peers, and to avoid engaging in behaviors that may condone bullying (e.g., excluding students). Garrity, Jens, Porter, Sager, Short-Camilli, and Seifert (2004) note that the underlying principles of the program include “it is the adult’s responsibility to make the school environment safe for students. When confronted by a caring community, bullying is defused. Bullying does not

correspond with conflict, as power can be shifted away from the bully, leaving many means to an end” (p. 3).

The program also focuses on differentiating key bullying concepts, such as the difference between normal peer conflict and bullying, equal power and an imbalance of power among friends, accidents versus intentional behavior (Garrity et al., 2004). In relation to reporting and responding in particular, the distinction between tattling and reporting is made for students. Students are also taught the acronym HA



HA SO to understand the six stages to avoid victimization (i.e., Help, Assert Yourself, Humor, Avoid, Self-talk and Own). Bully-Proofing Your School also aims to secure the involvement of the school staff in reinforcing the standards of the curriculum by offering training sessions to school staff to expand knowledge on special topics such as cyber bullying and relational aggression. Staff are also encouraged to hold group meetings at a consistent time, such as having a “lunch bunch” group in order to ensure ease of scheduling.

Bully-Proofing Your School consists of six sessions, with varying sessions for victims and bullies (Garrity et al., 2004). Students are grouped according to their bully/victim status with sessions tailored accordingly. Session 1 for victim groups aims to introduce the characteristics of positive friendships, while session 2 progresses to an assessment of the nature and extent of students’ friendships and includes role plays and tips for joining a group. Additionally, session 3 addresses self-esteem, session 4 includes information regarding assertive communication, session 5 deals with interpreting a bullying situation accurately, and session 6 focuses on reviewing information from previous sessions and acknowledging student growth

and progress. For bully groups, sessions rely heavily on tactics to change cognitive distortions and thinking errors. Session 1 includes information about thinking errors and tracking thinking errors, session 2 highlights the need for realistic expectations for students, session 3 targets empathy skills and development, session 4 and session 5 teach anger management and problem-solving skills, and session 6 is a review and culmination of previous sessions and post-assessment.

Research support. Menard, Grotmeter, Gianola, and O’Neal (2008) reported that The Bully Proofing Your School curriculum was effective in reducing bullying behaviors, school violence, and in decreasing students’ pro-bullying attitudes at the elementary school level when the program was implemented for five years in two elementary schools. Students in the two schools were compared to elementary students in one control school on various outcomes (i.e., relationships with parents and other adults, friends’ attitudes towards aggression, the student’s own attitudes towards aggression, attitudes towards school and school climate, school safety, substance use, and physical, verbal, and relational aggression).

When the program was implemented at the middle school level, the implementation integrity was questionable, leading the investigators to draw the conclusion that the program “does no harm and may do some good” (p. 4). In one of the schools, a lack of administrative support for the program may have led to problems and skepticism on the part of school staff regarding implementation. Further research

on the fidelity and outcomes of program implementation at the middle school level is warranted.

Further information. More information, including ordering information, is available at the following website: <http://www.schoolengagement.org/index.cfm/Bully%20Proof%20Your%20School>.

The Peaceful Schools Project

Population. The Peaceful Schools Project is a school-wide bullying prevention and intervention program designed for use with elementary school students.

Program description. In this program, more weight is placed on positive reinforcement to increase prosocial behaviors in place of punishment and more punitive methods. Additionally, classroom meetings are held regularly (i.e., directly following instances of bullying as soon as they occur) to encourage students to work as a team and receive immediate feedback regarding appropriate ways to respond. Adult and peer mentoring are provided through the “Bruno Program.” Overall, a “safe educational environment” is promoted at the elementary school level by fostering an awareness of the dynamics among bullies, victims, and bystanders, and teaching students to tackle these issues by instilling self-esteem and compassion.

Psychoeducation about bullying is provided through twelve “Gentle Warrior” lessons, which are usually conducted in physical education or health classes. The “Gentle Warrior” lessons include relaxation, role plays, and defensive martial arts (Twemlow, Fonagy, & Sacco, 2005). For example, teachers are encouraged to draw from other academic lessons (e.g., in history class), to encourage discussion about bullying scenarios in current events. Developers of this program recognize sports activities and physical education classes as a perfect avenue for achieving the goal of generalization, since choosing captains and participating in competitive games often introduce power-struggles that are characteristic of bullying. Much of the psychoeducation provided is geared towards helping students who are bullied learn how to react when they are victimized. Martial arts serve as a basis for encouraging self-protective/defending behaviors like assertiveness and physical safety. Additionally, students learn about the roles and qualities of victims, bystanders, and bullies. The program offers suggestions for what students can do when confronted with a student who bullies. Students often also engage in a reflection time at the end of the day for 10 minutes in which students discuss the events of the day from varying perspectives (i.e. bully, victim, bully-victim) and determine if the class should display a banner outside the classroom saying that they had a good day. Reflection time serves as a critical thinking experience for students and an opportunity for teachers to consider the bullying dynamics within their classrooms (Twemlow et al., 2005).

Responses to bullying are carried out through discipline strategies that are implemented without victimizing or singling out the bully perpetrator. Self-protective responses are taught through discrete skills (e.g., take a deep breath), and teachers are instructed to provide redirections and reminders of the messages from the Gentle Warrior lessons. Subsequent offenses warrant a referral to a counselor, social worker, or other specialist who may be suitable to respond to more serious bullying. Next, students who engage in serious and chronic forms of bullying are sent to the principal, who works with the teacher to collaborate and develop a plan to intervene. A home report and even a parent visit often follow as well. The student is welcomed back to the classroom with a fresh start once the discipline has been completed.

Research support. The Peaceful Schools Project intervention was implemented in nine elementary schools with 1,345 elementary students in grades 3-5. The intervention was compared to a “treatment as usual” control condition and a psychiatric consultation condition. Outcomes of the intervention

were assessed after two years of active intervention and one year of maintenance intervention. Outcomes were measured through peer and self-reports of bullying and victimization, reports of bystander behavior, self-reports of empathy towards victims, self-reports of the legitimacy of aggression, and classroom observations of disruptive behaviors. Students in The Peaceful Schools Project intervention condition showed decreases in peer-reported victimization, aggression, and aggressive bystanding. Moreover, students in The Peaceful Schools Project condition demonstrated reductions in off-task behavior and disruptive behavior, as noted by classroom observers. Reduced levels of victimization, aggressive bystander behavior, and aggression were maintained even in the third year of maintenance follow-up (Twemlow et al., 2005).

Further information. More information, including ordering information and program manuals, can be found at the program website: <http://backoffbully.com/Pages/peacefulSchools.html>.

Steps to Respect

Population. The Steps to Respect program is a school-wide bullying prevention and intervention program designed for use with students in the last three years of elementary school. The program can be implemented with students in grades 3, 4, and 5 or in grades 4, 5, and 6, depending on the structure of the school.

Program description. This program's psychoeducational component strikes a balance by teaching pro-social friendship skills, as well as coping skills for dealing with bullying. Based on research that friendship is a critical protective factor in decreasing bullying and victimization involvement (Committee for Children, 2005). Students are specifically taught steps for making and keeping friends, how to join a group activity, and how to behave if they are rejected from the activity (e.g., using positive self-talk or finding a new group). Additional skills include assertiveness training, the



distinctions between aggression and assertiveness, emotion management, help seeking, education on positive bystander behaviors, increasing empathy, and reporting bullying to adults even when children have stopped it successfully (Brown, Low, Smith, & Haggerty, 2011). Finally, students are taught how to define bullying, as well as other skills such as bystander actions that can be taken when students witness bullying during the program's 11 lessons.

Like many of the other programs, social-emotional learning is emphasized. However, this program is unique in that social skills are tied directly into the Language Arts curriculum through discussions and assignments geared towards grades 3-6. This age group was specifically targeted by the Steps to Respect program in order to prevent increases in bullying that typically occur during the transition period from middle to high school (Committee for Children, 2005). In addition, students are taught how to define bullying, as well as other skills such as bystander actions that can be taken when students witness bullying.

Steps to Respect outlines a specific procedure for how both students and staff should react to and report bullying. Specifically, students are taught to report bullying to any adult, and then these adults contact a "coach" (i.e., one of the specific members of the staff who has been trained and designated to respond to bullying incidents). The coach then works with both the bully and the victim to investigate what occurred, to develop a plan to resolve the issue, and to make sure that everyone follows through with the plan. Furthermore, establishing a hierarchical discipline plan is crucial.

Research support. According to the Committee for Children (2005), the implementation of Steps to Respect at a small group or classroom level has been related to decreases in bullying behavior on the playground (i.e., 800 fewer bullying incidents during the semester of implementation), as measured by blind coders in intervention schools. Specifically, in intervention schools that received Steps to Respect training, students reported that they were better able to assertively respond to bullying situations, and students, particularly male students, were observed as being more agreeable and less argumentative. Attitudes towards bullying also decreased in intervention schools (i.e., less tolerance of bullying, increased personal responsibility to eradicate bullying, increased perceptions that adults were responding to bullying). More recent investigations have also found support for the program specifically related to decreases in physical bullying perpetration, and increases in bystander intervention (Brown et al., 2011) and reductions in relational aggression, such as malicious gossip and social exclusion (Low, Frey, & Brockman, 2010).

Further information. More information, including ordering information, is available at the program website: <http://www.cfchildren.org/programs/str/overview/>.

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

Population. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is a school-wide bullying prevention and intervention program designed for use with students in grades 3 through 10.

Program description. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program was the first large-scale bullying prevention program available anywhere in the world. Originating in Europe, the program has since been made available in the United States.

The overall goals of the program are to reduce existing bullying problems among students, prevent new bullying problems from developing, create a safe learning environment, and improve peer relationships. The program seeks to reduce the reward students experience for engaging in bullying behaviors, and replace it with rewards for prosocial behaviors. Schools implementing the program create a bullying prevention committee that meets regularly to supervise the project. The committee also works to secure community involvement by developing partnerships with various community members. Additionally, the school administers a school-wide survey, provided by the program, to inform intervention efforts. Staff intervention in bullying is strongly encouraged, and when bullying behavior is detected, meetings are held with involved students and their parents.

Research support. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program has been evaluated in a number of studies to establish its effectiveness. Most research has taken place in Europe, however, some evidence exists supporting its use in the United States. At the elementary school level, a study of 12 participating schools showed decreases in self-reports of bullying and victimization, decreases in adult observation of bullying, and improved school climate (Kallestad & Olweus, 2003). At the middle school level, a study of 18 schools using the program found that the program led to decreases in reports of bullying for males and females, as well as reports of victimization for males (Limber, Nation, Tracy, Melton, & Flerx, 2004).

Further information. More information on the program, including ordering information, can be found on the program website: <http://www.hazelden.org/web/go/olweus>

Other Bullying Resources

Below are video materials and other resources and sources of information related to Bullying.

Target Bullying Intervention Program and Website

The Target Bullying Intervention Program (T-BIP) is a 3 hour, one-on-one psychoeducational intervention designed for students who frequently engage in bullying behavior. Research is on-going, but early evidence suggests that the program leads to reductions in office referrals for bullying behaviors post-intervention. More information on the Target Bullying Intervention can be found in the Program Brief (Strawhun, J., & Peterson, R. (2013). *The Target Bullying Intervention Program. Program Brief*. Lincoln, NE: Student Engagement Project, University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the Nebraska Department of Education and at the program website at: www.targetbully.com. See the *Program Brief on The Target Bullying Intervention Program* available at

<http://k12engagement.unl.edu>.

Stop Bullying.Gov

The stop bullying website has some very short videos about bullying with experts discussing bullying prevention. It gives definitions of bullying and cyber-bullying and who is at risk for being bullied and for bullying. This site gives some statistics and basic facts about bullying and would be most appropriate for students, parents or educators who want to get some very basic information about bullying. There is no curriculum on this website. It is probably most appropriate for educators and parents, but the information on the website could be discussed with students. There is a list of resources on the website that address both bullying and cyberbullying.

<http://www.stopbullying.gov/>

Bullying at School and Online at Education.Com

This website has a bully quiz of ten questions to see what people know about bullying. It also has suggestions for parents about what to do when their child has been bullied or is the bully. It also talks about how to help preschool and kindergarten children with a bully in their classroom. This website would be primarily for parents and does not have curriculum or resources to use in a classroom setting. It does discuss some studies of bullying. The editors of the site are researchers in the field of bullying.

<http://www.education.com/topic/school-bullying-teasing/>

The Bully Dance (Video resources for youth)

This video is the third film in the ShowPeace series produced in Canada. These videos are animated and are designed to explore issues of conflict and dispute resolution. This video does not have any talking, but is animation only. The video is ten minutes long and would be most appropriate for elementary students. It is about a community that is disrupted when a bully victimizes a smaller member of the group. The whole community is drawn into dealing with the bully, who is also a victim in his own house. The video deals with issues of peer pressure, accountability, and imbalance of power. There is also a study guide with the video.

<http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/bully.html>

Stories of Us (Video resources for youth)

This website has materials about a bullying prevention program called Promoting Positive Peer Relationship (P3R) which is a series of film-based resources for supporting students and educators in addressing the problem of bullying in school. The film is 23 minutes long. There are curriculum resources and adult education resources with this curriculum. More information about the videos and the curriculum is available on the website. The videos feature eighth grade students and would be most appropriate for a middle school population.

<http://www.storiesofus.com/>

The Bully Project (Video resources for youth)

This video was created to make students more aware of bullying from the victims' perspective showing some rather graphic images of what bullying looks like. The film is 98 minutes long with a rating of PG-13. It would be more appropriate for high school students, although some of the students being bullied in the video look like middle school and possibly upper elementary students. People in the video talk about the effects of bullying on the parents and the students and how this behavior impacts the victims. This website has a pledge that students and others can take to end bullying. This video could be used to show what bullying looks like and get a dialogue started with students about how to handle bullying.

<http://www.thebullyproject.com/>

Bullying Assessment Tools (Assessment materials)

A compendium of assessment materials published by the Centers for Disease Control includes 33 surveys measuring bullying victimization, perpetration, and bystander behavior. Several assessments are also included to gauge the risk and protective factors associated with bullying involvement. Measures included in this document were published or updated between 1990 and 2007. All measures have been previously published in peer-reviewed journals or books. Although this list of measures is extensive, it is not exhaustive. The compendium is available at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/bullyCompendiumbk-a.pdf>

Translating Research to Practice

This website provides great ideas on how to translate research to practice. This is also a critical resource for parents that helps in addressing bullying both at school and at home:

<http://www.education.com/>

Evidence-Based Practices Related to Bullying

The following resources are recommended when selecting which evidence-based intervention is most appropriate for your school and classroom. Each resource is nationally-based and maintains rigorous standards for program inclusion:

National Registry for Evidence-based Programs and Practices:

<http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/>

Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development:

<http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/>

The Model Programs Guide:

<http://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/>

The Born this Way Foundation (Lady Gaga's website)

Led by Lady Gaga and her mother Cynthia Germanotta, the Born This Way Foundation was founded in 2011 to foster a more accepting society, where differences are embraced and individuality is celebrated. The Foundation is dedicated to creating a safe community that helps connect young people with the skills and opportunities they need to build a kinder, braver world.

www.bornthiswayfoundation.org



Student Draw-a-Bully drawings in this document are courtesy of Susan Swearer's Empowerment Initiative. <http://empowerment.unl.edu>

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Note: This document is a supplement to the two *Strategy Briefs, Bullying Prevention and Intervention*, and *Interventions for Bullying Behaviors*. Additionally, see the *Program Brief, The Target bullying Intervention Program*. These are available from the Student Engagement Project, University of Nebraska at <http://k12engagement.unl.edu>.

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