

Bullying: Is Prevention the Cure?

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Sept 17, 2012

Crime Prevention Ottawa
Speakers Series

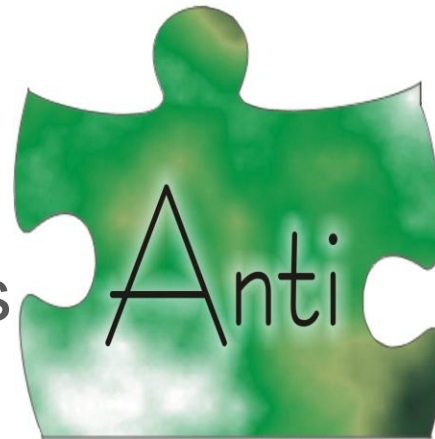


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- 🟢 Past Approaches
- 🟢 Community Approach
- 🟢 Prevention Focus
- 🟢 Peer Attitudes & beliefs
- 🟢 Bystanders engagement

Let's Complete The Puzzle



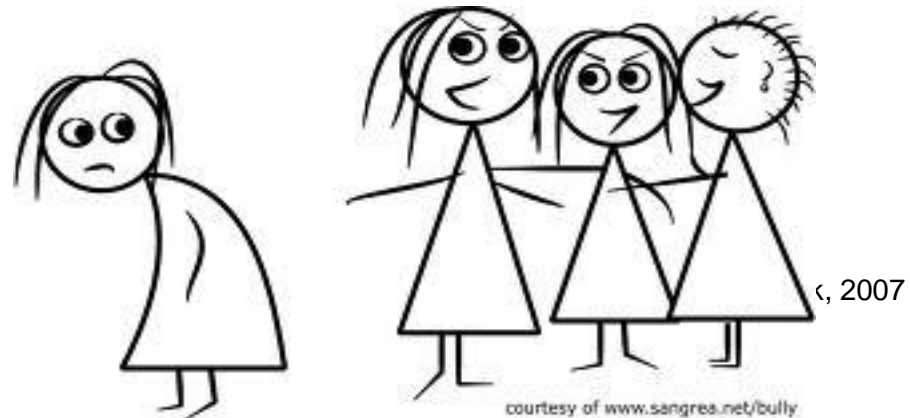
DESIGNED BY: JIMMY McDONALD & ALLAN TURNBULL

Together

Bullying: A Relationship Problem Requiring Relationship Solutions

Bullying is a relationship problem in which an individual or group uses **power aggressively** to cause **distress** to another.

- 💧 The child who bullies is learning to use power and aggression to control others.
- 💧 The child who is being victimized becomes trapped in an abusive relationship and needs help to stop the bullying.
- 💧 The child who stands by and does nothing actively contributes to making the problem worse



Current Definition

- 🔹 Any behaviour intended to cause harm
 - 🔹 Physical
 - 🔹 Verbal
 - 🔹 Social
 - 🔹 Cyber
- 🔹 Occurs repeatedly over time
- 🔹 Where there is a power imbalance
- 🔹 Directed to one or a few individuals

Canada on the World Stage

Source	Variable	Ranking
Organization for Economic Development	Reading Math Science	3 rd out of 41 7 th out of 41 11 th out of 41
World Health Organization	Victimization Bullying	27 th out of 35 26 th out of 35

Canada Relative to Others

- ◆ Over a 10 year period bullying rates have remained stable in Canada
- ◆ Other countries have been preventing bullying problems more effectively than Canada
 - ◆ Rates have declined in other countries such as Norway, England, Australia & Finland which have country wide anti-bullying programmes
- ◆ We need a more concerted effort to address bullying in our schools

Why do Children Use Bullying Behaviours?

- 💧 Bullying is Learned
- 💧 Bullies are made not born
- 💧 They are a product of their environment

Child-Environment Interaction

- ◆ Over and above whatever genetic predisposition a child is born with, aggression as a way of interacting is **learned** from a child's interaction with their environment
- ◆ Transformation of the child's initial aggressive behaviour into habitual aggressive behaviour depends on the responses of the child's environment to the aggression ***

Bullying is all about **POWER**

- ◆ Have learned to use inter-personal power in an aggressive way
- ◆ Exert their power over their victim by virtue of
 - ◆ Physical size and strength
 - ◆ Status within the group
 - ◆ Knowing another person's vulnerability
 - ◆ By recruiting support from others
- ◆ Power & aggression lead to dominance & status
- ◆ Over time power imbalances become larger
- ◆ Kids learn to align with the bully for protection & status

Those who use bullying behaviours

- ◆ Are not maladjusted or marginalized
- ◆ May be popular & disliked
- ◆ Report a positive self-concept
- ◆ Perceived to be leaders by peers & adults
- ◆ Possess valued competencies
 - ◆ teachers identify half the bullies identified by peers
- ◆ Have status & power within the peer group
- ◆ Makes convincing popular students to intervene difficult

What Can We Conclude?

- ◆ Power & control possessed by bully
- ◆ Code of secrecy
- ◆ Feelings of futility for those who are victimized
- ◆ Involvement of the peer group in supporting the behaviour

What does this mean for Intervention?

- ◆ Zero tolerance policies & negative sanctions are inadequate
 - ◆ High status & powerful bullies will be particularly resistant to change if they perceive their interactions to be socially accepted
- ◆ Programs focused on improving self-esteem will be ineffective
 - ◆ high self-esteem reflects the positive feedback from peers
 - ◆ makes it difficult for bullies to recognize the negative effects
- ◆ **Peers** are a critical & largely untapped resource in school-based anti-bullying efforts
 - ◆ But may be difficult to engage because of risks of loss of status
- ◆ The peer group as a whole must be taught not to empower the bully by revering or supporting him/her

Effective Strategies

- ◆ Need to move away from the quick fix approach that is often designed to suppress bullying at all costs to one that is more positive in promoting students' cooperation and pro-social ways of thinking and behaving.
(Mellor1999)

What Can Adults do?

- ★ Build skills that are incompatible with bullying
- ★ Influencing group norms
- ★ Build capacity in all youth
- ★ Effectively address bullying when it occurs.

Community Wide Anti-bullying Strategies

- ◆ To stop bullying, everyone who is a part of a community needs to be both aware & willing to step up:
 - ◆ Parents
 - ◆ School Staff – Teachers & Administrators
 - ◆ Students
 - ◆ Members of the community –Coaches, Girl Guide leaders, community centres
- ◆ Anti-bullying efforts must be a true community initiative, a **community-wide effort.**

Whole School Approach: Key Principals

- ◆ Systemic restructuring of school social environment
 - ◆ Strong adult leadership & strong student-teacher bonding
 - ◆ To build a strong sense of school membership
 - ◆ Clear and consistent behavioural norms
 - ◆ Adult awareness of and involvement in bullying issues
 - ◆ Able to take consistent and appropriate action
 - ◆ Effective (focused and intense) supervision
 - ◆ Involvement of multiple stakeholders
 - ◆ Involvement of youth in program development and delivery
 - ◆ Target multiple risk and protective factors
 - ◆ Focus on early, long-term intervention

The BIG Question

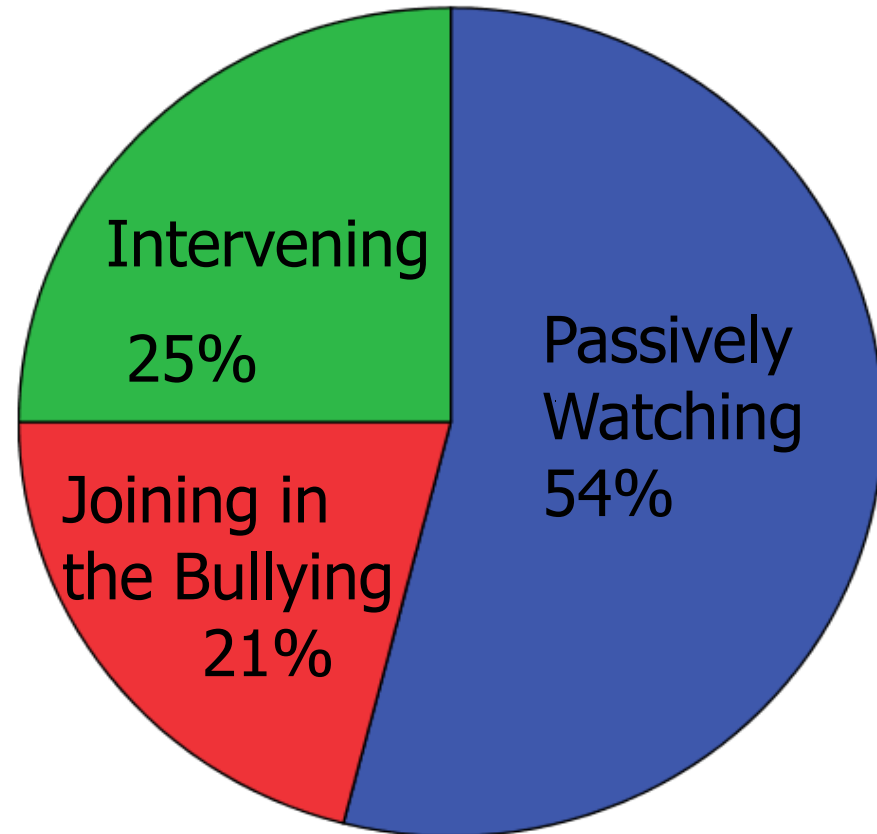
- 💧 Why do youth who we believe to be good and caring individuals behave in ways that condone or maintain bullying?
- 💧 How can we convince them to change?

“Conducive social conditions
rather than monstrous
people produce heinous
deeds”

Bandura (1991)

Role of Peer Bystanders

- ◆ The more peers present, the longer the bullying episode
- ◆ When bystanders intervene, they are
 - aggressive 1/2 the time
 - appropriate 1/2 the time
- ◆ In the majority of episodes (57%), peer intervention stops bullying **within 10 seconds**, regardless of strategy



Risks to the Bystanders:

- ◆ Numbs reactions to violence
- ◆ Risk becoming desensitized to cruelty
- ◆ Produces high levels of excitement & arousal
- ◆ Breaks down inner controls against antisocial activities
- ◆ May not be aware of the serious consequences
- ◆ Victim becomes dehumanized or deserving of abuse
- ◆ Hinders the development of empathy & compassion
- ◆ May experience feelings of guilt for doing nothing
- ◆ Self-respect & self-confidence may be eroded
- ◆ **Moral disengagement** - How people do bad things - turn off moral controls

Why Don't Bystanders Intervene?

- 💧 Afraid of getting hurt
- 💧 Afraid of becoming the next target
- 💧 Afraid of making things worse
- 💧 Don't know what to do
- 💧 Think it is adults' responsibility*****

Reasons for Targeting the Group as a Whole

- ◆ Youth facing bullying problems as bystanders are trapped in a social dilemma.
- ◆ They understand that bullying is wrong and they would like to do something to stop it **BUT**
- ◆ They strive to secure their own status and safety in the peer group.
- ◆ However, *if fewer children took on the role of reinforcer when witnessing bullying, and if the group refused to assign high status for those who bully, an important reward for bullying others would be lost.*

- ✔ victims who had one or more classmates defending them when victimized were less anxious, less depressed, and had a higher self-esteem than victims without defenders
- ✔ Mobilizing the peer group to support the victim is crucial in order to minimize the adverse effects for those who are victimized.

Engaging Bystanders

- Early school-based programmes focused on punitive consequences for the perpetrators
- Others focused on teaching targeted children's social skills
- Most current interventions are now focused on engaging bystanders



Don't stand by, stand up



Peer Attitudes & Beliefs

- Bullying is a group phenomena
- The Motivation to bully relates to one's social standing in a group
- interventions against bullying should be targeted at the peer group level rather than at individual bullies and victims

Building Skills Incompatible with Bullying

- ✔ Acceptance of diversity
- ✔ Empathy
- ✔ Foster inclusiveness
- ✔ Create a circle of caring



Ten Critical Steps to creating a Bully-free Zone

1. Learn the signs & language of bullying
2. Understand the importance of power and provide positive ways to feel powerful
3. Establish a positive climate of equality where kids feel safe and supported by one another and by you. Perceptions of each other as equals minimizes the likelihood of engaging in bullying behaviour.
4. Identify hidden bullying behaviours. Bullying behaviours are often concealed and discreet so as to hurt the person they are directed to while remaining mostly hidden from others.
5. Involve the youth in the development of the rights and responsibilities of each member of your group

Bully-free Zone

6. Team build early in the school year. Youth may try to use bullying to develop a sense of belonging and alliance amongst some members of the class by ostracizing or excluding others.
7. Foster inclusiveness. Activities designed to help all the students in your classroom find commonalities (e.g. a scavenger hunt to find something in common with every child in the class) will foster a sense of belonging.
8. Embrace diversity.
9. Hold children accountable. When you see the behaviour happening, identify it as hurtful and harmful for those involved and have students come up with a solution. Focus on being hard on the problem and soft on the person.
10. Encourage children to behave in ways that reflect empathy and respect for one another and for themselves.

Bullying Interventions



Interventions

💧 Primary-

- 💧 its a prevention strategy for everyone before they get into a situation that they will need help with. Example: vaccinations

💧 Secondary-

- 💧 identifying an at-risk group and providing services to them. Example: teen pregnancy

💧 Tertiary-

- 💧 Modifying the environment. Example: AA (alcoholics anonymous) meeting

Helping Kids

Primary Interventions

For ALL kids

- Curriculum activities to instill anti-bullying attitudes
- Lessons in living
 - Peer mediation
 - Emotion coaching
 - Roots of empathy
 - Social skills training
 - Circle of caring

Secondary Interventions

For subgroups of kids at risk

- Targeted interventions for those children involved in bullying
 - Alternatives to suspensions
 - Counseling
 - Self-control programs
 - support

Tertiary Interventions

Changes to the environment

- Bus monitors
- Increased playground supervision
- Structured playground activities
- Staggered lunch hours

Canadian Primary Prevention Programmes



- ◆ Roots of Empathy
 - ◆ Mary Gordon
- ◆ WITS
- ◆ Fourth R



**WITS Rock
Solid Primary
Program**

Walk away
Ignore
Talk it out
Seek help

University of Victoria
British Columbia - Canada

A poster for the WITS Rock Solid Primary Program. It features a cartoon character of a bear wearing a purple hat and a white shirt. The text on the poster lists the program's name and four strategies: Walk away, Ignore, Talk it out, and Seek help. At the bottom, there are logos for VCC, BCIT, and the University of Victoria.

◆ WITS® Bullying Prevention Workshop

September 26th 2012

RCMP Headquarters , 73 Leikin Drive, Building M3-
3rd Floor

Ottawa, Ontario, Time: 8:30 am to 3:30 pm

- ◆ Come & learn more about a program that can help communities deal with bullying & peer victimization.
- ◆ Will highlight the key role of uniformed community champions and leaders (including RCMP members, firefighters, and city and provincial police officers) in catalyzing start-up of the evidenced-based WITS® Programs in their communities.
- ◆ RCMP officers from across will demonstrate WITS & WITS LEADS
- ◆ Certificates of achievement will be issued
- ◆ To register please contact Shelley Booth, WITS Research Coordinator by email: sbooth@uvic.ca or telephone: 250-472-

International

- ◆ KiVa Anti-bullying Programme – Finland

- ◆ <http://www.kivakoulu.fi/there-is-no-bullying-in-my-school>



- ◆ Olweus Bullying Prevention – Norway

- ◆ <http://www.olweus.org/public/index.page>



- ◆ Steps to Respect – American

- ◆ <http://www.cfchildren.org/program/steps-to-respect>



What Can You as an Individual Do?

- ◆ Give a clear message that bullying is not acceptable to you
- ◆ Focus on strategies that do not model the use of power to manipulate or gain compliance
- ◆ Offer age appropriate opportunities to feel powerful and in control in prosocial ways
- ◆ Teach & model respect for differences
- ◆ Provide children with the skills to express their feelings & emotions in a prosocial manner
- ◆ Monitor the children in your group & their activities
- ◆ Make a commitment to model for all the children in your life a rejection of violent & aggressive behaviour

Challenges:

- Implementation is long and complex
- Change must be at all levels of the school and community
- Students will not change without adult change
- Rights, roles and responsibilities for administrators, teachers, students and parents must be clarified
- Attitudinal change precedes behavior change
- Change is slow & gradual & needs constant support
- Everyone needs to be on side
- Once sensitized it may seem problems are worse
- Bullying is about power & aggression which are emotion laden concerns

- Pepler and Craig (2000)

Bullying Throughout the Life Span

- Without intervention bullying is life long Children do not “just outgrow it”
- Children who learn to acquire power through bullying on the playground may transfer these lessons to
 - sexual harassment, date violence, gang attacks, marital abuse, child abuse, elder abuse and bullying in the work place

Relationship Problems Require Relationship Solutions

- ◆ Interventions are required to disrupt the process that maintains the interactions
- ◆ Want to promote the development of healthy relationships
- ◆ Think creatively



EMCP '06

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DIVERSITY
DIFFERENCE

Websites:

- 🟡 www.prevnet.ca
- 🟡 www.publicsafety.gc.ca/res/cp/res/bully-eng.aspx
- 🟡 <http://www.youth.society.uvic.ca/WITS>
- 🟡 <http://cbpp-pcpe.phac-aspc.gc.ca/>



Thank you!
Questions / Comments?

