

Bullying

Presentation to Parents

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Outline for today's session

- Definitions of Bullying (what it is, what it isn't)
- Prevalence
- Consequences of bullying
- Who is likely to bully/ be bullied
- Managing bullying in schools
- Punitive & non-punitive approaches
- Our policy (processes and content)
- Guidelines for parents

Definitions of Bullying

- Definitions vary:

- Tattum & Tattum (1992) “the wilful conscious desire to hurt another and put him/her under stress”... but how do you measure intentions?
- Most other definitions place power at the heart of the matter... Farrington (1993) “the repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person” or Smith, Pepler, & Rigby (2004) “the systematic abuse of power”.

Definitions of Bullying

- Olweus (1993) formulated most influential definition which took into account behavioural terms, the power issue as well as the subjective element of intention...

"A student being exposed, repeatedly and over time, to intentional injury or discomfort inflicted by one or more students. This may include physical contact, verbal assault, making obscene gestures or facial expressions, and intentionally excluding the student. Bullying also implies an imbalance of power or strength in which one child is victimised by others."

Our Definition

Cranbrook School Statement on Bullying & Harrassment:

“Bullying is any individual or group action or words that use strength or power to coerce, threaten, persecute or oppress others repeatedly”.

Junior School Adaptation for the boys:

“Bullying is repeated intimidation of a person, using actions or words”.

Bullying is...

- Directly physical: Hitting, tripping, and pushing or damaging property.
- Directly verbal: Name calling, insults, prejudiced remarks and verbal abuse.
- Indirect and often designed to harm someone's social reputation &/or cause humiliation: lying & spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude, damaging social rep and acceptance as well as cyber bullying.

Bullying is not...

- Mutual conflict – no imbalance of power.
- Social rejection or dislike – unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude, or create dislike by others.
- Single-episode acts of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation – not repetitive in nature.

Prevalence

- 19% of students 7-17 in Australian schools are bullied weekly. No study of social behaviour anywhere in the world has shown an absence of bullying (Rigby, 2001).
- Bullying is normative – power relationships likely to occur in any human group where people can gain rewards for using antisocial power in antisocial ways against each other.
- Likely to occur in a school – where individuals are not able to leave easily.

Consequences of Bullying

- Meta-analytic review of 20 years of research linked bullying to depression, anxiety, low self-esteem and poor self-concept Hawker & Boulton (2000).
- Longitudinal studies Rigby (1999), Bond et al. (2001) - have established causation- being repeatedly bullied actually impacts on child's mental and physical health.
- Extreme responses to bullying – Columbine massacre, Martin Bryant in Port Arthur and most recently the Virginia Tech massacre.

Who is most likely to bully/ be bullied?

There is not just one contributing factor...

- Individual differences – personality factors are only part of the story. Victims (relatively introverted, poor self-esteem, lacking in assertiveness) Bullies (aggressive, Machiavellian, low empathy).
- Parental factors: Over-protective parents
- Sociocultural factors: gender, race, ethnicity, social class, religious affiliation. Influence from family re other s-c groups.
- School factors: school ethos – can be up to 4 x higher in one school compared to another in same SES area with same ethnic mix.

Managing bullying in schools

- Effective management is typically evidenced by a combination of actions taken by a school not one singular action Rigby (2006).
- Not all bullying can be prevented, hence actions are proposed to deal with cases that arise.
- The goal is to:
 - result in the discontinuation of the bullying behaviour
 - deter others from bullying
 - provide an outcome that is just

Punitive & Non- Punitive Approaches

Punitive Approaches

- Involve the use of sanctions.
- Most commonly used.
- Example approach: Principles of restorative justice.

Punitive Approaches

■ Advantages

- Justice is seen to be done
- Easier to make statements about what will happen if people bully

■ Disadvantages

- Intensive and time-consuming investigation required
- Pay back
- Punishment increases resentment rather than thoughtfulness
- Does not repair friendships
- Punishment can lead to downward behaviour spiral
- No convincing evidence for effectiveness

Non-Punitive Approaches

- Mediation
- No-blame approach (aka 'peer support approach')
- Method of shared concern.

Non-Punitive Approaches

■ Advantages

- No need to 'build a case'- focus on negative situation to be changed.
- Some students may not be aware of the degree of harmfulness of their actions.
- More likely to accept responsibility rather than becoming defensive, resentful & retaliatory.
- Less likely to put victim at further risk.
- No students can be unfairly punished.
- Utilises power of peer group.

Non-Punitive Approaches

■ Disadvantages

- Ringleaders – lower empathy
- Parents of victim can react negatively – perceived unfairness
- Can seem hard to reconcile
- They are more time consuming (questionable?)
- Success dependent on people using technique
- Can be anxiety provoking for victim

Cranbrook Junior School Anti-Bullying Policy

June, 2007

“A multi-strategic approach using a collection of ‘active ingredients’ works better than a single approach”

McGrath (2006)

Information Gathering

- Parent focus group
- Staff focus group
- Student survey
- Research of the literature.

Writing of the Policy

- Aim:

To utilise a common language and approach to bullying within the Cranbrook School Community that is closely aligned with the current research into bullying in Australian Schools.

- Who was involved:

Head of Junior School – Michael Dunn

Deputy Head of Junior School – Nick Saunders

School Counsellor (Junior School) – Sophie Heseltine

School Counsellor (Senior School) – John McCormack

Director of Pastoral Care – Helen Love

Initiatives to minimise bullying

- Education of School Community (staff, students & parents).
- Preventative Programs.
- Intervention Programs for at-risk students.
- Management of bullying procedure.

Prevention

- Bounce Back K-6
- Year 5 Program with School Counsellor

Prevention: Bounce Back

- Classroom resiliency program covering a range of topics implemented K-6.
- It is a multi-factored approach to prevention by building resilience.
- Specific anti-bullying units in addition to explicit teaching of pro-social values and social competencies.

Prevention: Bystander training

- Program for Year 5.
- Bystanders present 85% of the time O'Connor, Pepler & Craig (1999).
- Only minority of bystanders seek to discourage the bullying. When they do, bullying stops 50% of the time Hawkins, Pepler & Craig (2001).
- Will also include social problem solving and conflict resolution in addition to strategies to assist with emotional control.

Intervention: Confident Kids

- Program developed by Carolyn Hunt & Kathryn Berry. Based on Ron Rapee's Cool Kids program.
- Utilises a CBT model
- Teaches techniques for handling bullying situations in addition to other aspects of emotional resilience.
- A Year 5 group and a Year 6 group of kids identified as being at risk through the survey will be operating in Term 3 & 4 from week 5. I will be co-facilitating this program with a Doctoral student from Sydney Uni.

Management

- Who is the Bullying Reference Group?
- Review of the process
- The mediation process
- The use of sanctions

Guidelines for Parents *

- Let your children know that bullying is unacceptable for anyone, for any reason.
- If your child is experiencing bullying at School or is has been reported to have been involved in bullying behaviour, **do not contact the other parents**, this usually exacerbates conflict and does not work towards a solution that is best for the children – “It will certainly make matters worse for the child being bullied.” (Field & Carroll, 2006, p.212)

* Source: Field & Carroll (2006 in McGrath & Noble, Bullying Solutions, 2006)

Guidelines for Parents

- Model and encourage respect and pro-social behaviours and values. Emphasise seeing things from the others point of view and the right of others not to be mistreated.
- Encourage your child to support those who are being bullied. Doing nothing means the bullying continues.
- Report any incidents of bullying, even if they do not involve your child.

Guidelines for Parents

- Monitor your child's activities – set limits and consequences.
- Avoid bullying at home eg with power imbalanced siblings.
- Be a positive role model for being empathic, resilient and compassionate.
- Keep an eye out for signs that your child may be being bullied.

Guidelines for Parents

- If you have been bullied in the past you may need to work through these issues with a counsellor. If there are family issues going on that may be contributing – consider seeking help also.
- Help your child to develop social skills such as assertiveness, and eye contact.
- Help your child to distinguish between friendly and unfriendly behaviours as sometimes children are bullied by those they perceive as friends.

Guidelines for Parents

- Encourage age-appropriate independence in your child.
- Assist them to develop effective ways of dealing with fear and anger instead of internalising or externalising.
- Encourage your child to see the positive side to other students rather than expressing contempt and superiority.

Conclusion

- In any school, bullying will occur. But there will be far less bullying and it will be more easily stopped in schools with a planned program of intervention and effective management practices.
- Students' social and emotional learning facilitates their academic learning, hence the need to integrate these interventions into the core business of the School.
- Interventions which involve school, family, and community work best, fostering a common language, procedure and conceptual model. McGrath (2006)

**Thank you for coming & braving
the weather this evening!**

